

THE GREAT WAR

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Photo Vandyk.

FIELD MARSHAL EARL HAIG

THE GREAT WAR

BY

THE RIGHT HON.
WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, CH, M.P.

“ Fully Illustrated with
Photographs, Drawings and Maps



VOLUME TWO

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THE GREAT WAR

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CHAPTER XXVIII

CORONEL AND THE FALKLANDS

OCTOBER, NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER, 1914

"Ill fared it then with Roderick Dhu,
That on the field his target he threw,
Whose brazen studs and tough bull hide
Had Death so often dashed aside
For trave'd abroad his arms to wield
Fitzjames's blade was sword and shield"

SCOTT, "The Lady of the Lake," Canto V, xv

The Mystery of Admiral von Spee—First Threat to South American Waters—His Apparition at Samoa—His Second Disappearance—Renewed Threat to South America—Rear-Admiral Cradock Ordered to Concentrate—The Relative Forces—Importance of the Battleship *Canopus*—First Combination against Admiral von Spee—Rear-Admiral Cradock's Disquieting Telegram—His Cruise up the Chilean Coast without the *Canopus*—Certain News of the Enemy's Arrival—Admiralty Measures—News of the Action off Coronel—The Meeting of the Squadrons—The British Attack the Germans—Destruction of the *Good Hope* and *Monmouth*—Escape of the *Glasgow*—Reflections upon the Admiralty Examined—An Explanation of Rear-Admiral Cradock's Action—The Alternatives Open to the German Squadron—Second Combination against Admiral von Spee—Battle-cruisers *Invincible* and *Inflexible* Ordered to South America—Arrangements with the Japanese Admiralty—Development of the Second Combination—British Naval Resources at their Utmost Strain—Relief in the Indian Ocean—Accelerated Dispatch of the Battle-Cruisers—Admiral von Spee at the Falklands—News of the Battle and of Victory—The Action—Total Destruction of the German Squadron—End of the German Cruiser Warfare—End of the Great Strain

AS has already been described, Admiral von Spee, the German Commander-in-Chief in the Far East, sailed from Tsingtau (Kiauchow)¹ in the last week of June, with the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, and on August 5, immediately after the British declaration of war, these two powerful ships were reported as being near the Solomon Islands. They were subsequently reported at New Guinea on August 7, and coaling at the Caroline Islands on the 9th. After this they vanished into the immense Pacific with its innumerable islands, and no one could tell where they would reappear. As the days succeeded one another and grew into weeks, our concern on their account extended and multiplied. Taking the Caroline Islands as the centre, we could draw daily

¹ Throughout this chapter the map on pages 408 and 409 and the table of ships on page 416 will be found useful.

widening circles, touching ever more numerous points where they might suddenly spring into action. These circles were varied according as the Germans were credited with proceeding at most economical speed, at three-quarter speed, or at full speed, and the speed at which they would be likely to steam depended upon the nature of the potential objective which in each case might attract them.

The Mystery of Admiral von Spee

We have seen how the mystery of their whereabouts affected the movements of the New Zealand and Australian convoys, and what very anxious decisions were forced upon us. We have seen how the uncertainty brooded over the little expedition from New Zealand to Samoa how glad we were when it arrived safely and seized the island how prompt we

were—providentially prompt—to snatch every vessel away from the roadstead of Simon the moment the troops and stores were landed. When at length more than five weeks had passed without any sign of their presence, we took a complete review of the whole situation. All probabilities now pointed to their going to the Magellan Straits or to the West Coast of South America. The Australian convoy was now provided with superior escort. Not a British vessel could be found in the anchorage at Simon. The old battleships were already on their way to guard the convoys in the Indian

Ocean. There was nowhere where they could do so much harm as in the Straits of Magellan. Moreover, we thought we had indications of German coaling arrangements on the Chilean coast. There were rumours of a fuelling base in the Magellan Straits, for which diligent search was being made. There was certainly German trade still moving along the Western Coast of South America.

First Threat to South American Waters —His Appearance at Simon

Accordingly, on September 14, the Admiralty sent the following telegram to Rear-Admiral Cradock, who commanded on the South American Station—

Privately to Rear-Admiral Cradock, H M S "Good Hope"

September 14, 5 50 p m

The Germans are resuming trade on West Coast of South America, and *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* may very probably arrive on that coast or in Magellan Straits.

Concentrate a squadron strong enough to meet *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, making Falkland Islands your coaling base, and leaving sufficient force to deal with *Dresden* and *Karlsruhe*.

Defence is joining you from Mediterranean, and *Canopus* is now en route to Abrolhos. You should keep at least one County class and *Canopus* with your flagship until *Defence* joins.

When you have superior force, you should at once search Magellan Straits with squadron, keeping in readiness to return and cover the River Plate, or, according to information, search as far as Valparaiso northwards, destroy the German

¹ The rocks of Abrolhos off the Brazilian coast were our secret coaling base in these waters.



REAR ADMIRAL COUNT VON SPEE

Count Von Spee was born at Copenhagen in 1861 and served with distinction in the German Navy. In 1914 he was in command of the German squadron on the China Station but about a month before the declaration of war sailed from Tsingtau with his squadron and in August was reported as being near the Solomon Islands. Von Spee returned at large a source of considerable anxiety to the British Admiralty and on November 1st at Coronel, defeated Admiral Cradock's squadron. A few weeks later, at the Falklands, von Spee encountered Admiral Sturdee and, in the sea fight that followed, was destroyed in his turn together with all six of his ships.

cruisers, and break up the German trade

You should search anchorage in neighbourhood of Egg Harbour and Golfo Nuevo¹

Two days later all uncertainties, and with them our anxieties, vanished, and news was received that both *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* had appeared off Samoa on September 14. There was nothing for them to hurt there. The empty roadstead mocked their power. The British flag flew on shore, and a New Zealand garrison, far too strong for any landing party, snarled at them from behind defences. Thus informed of the fate of their colony, the German cruisers put to sea after firing a few shells at the Government establishments.

A week later, the 22nd, they were at Papeete, which they bombarded, destroying half the town and sinking the little French gunboat *Zelee* which was in harbour. They left the same morning, steering on a northerly course. We did not hear of this till the 30th. Then once again silence descended on the vast recesses of the Pacific.

His Second Disappearance

We could now begin drawing our circles again from the beginning, and at any rate for several weeks we need not worry about these ships. Accordingly

¹ Details relating to coallers, supply ships and mails have been omitted unless of significance to the account.



Photo Elliott & Fry

REAR-ADMIRAL SIR C CRADOCK

In 1914 Admiral Cradock was commanding on the South American Station and upon him devolved the task of dealing with the elusive German squadron under von Spee. British ships encountered the German squadron in the evening of November 1, 1914 and after a forlorn action, both the British armoured cruisers were destroyed. Admiral Cradock went down with his flagship *Good Hope*.

the Admiralty telegraphed to Admiral Cradock, on September 16, telling him the new situation and that he need not now concentrate his cruisers, but could proceed at once to attack German trade in the Straits of Magellan and on the Chilean coast.

Nothing more happened for a fortnight. On October 4, wireless signals from the *Scharnhorst* were heard by Suva wireless station, and also at Wellington, New Zealand. From this it appeared that the two vessels were on the way between the

Marquesas Islands and Easter Island Evidently the South American plan was in their mind We passed our information to Admiral Cradock with the following telegram —

Admiralty to Rear-Admiral Cradock

October 5

It appears from information received that *Gneisenau* and *Scharnhorst* are working across to South America *Dresden* may be scouting for them You must be prepared to meet them in company *Canopus* should accompany *Glasgow*, *Monmouth* and *Otranto*, and should search and protect trade in combination

On the 8th (received 12th) Admiral Cradock replied as follows —

"Without alarming, respectfully suggest that, in event of the enemy's heavy cruisers and others concentrating West Coast of South America, it is necessary to have a British force on each coast strong enough to bring them to action

"For, otherwise, should the concentrated British force sent from South-East Coast be evaded in the Pacific, which is not impossible, (?) and) thereby (?) get) behind the enemy, the latter could destroy Falkland, English Bank, and Abrolhos coaling bases in turn with little to stop them, and with British ships unable to follow up owing to want of coal, enemy might possibly reach West Indies"

And on the same day (received 11th) he reported evidences of the presence of the *Dresden* in South American waters —

"Following intelligence re *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* has been received Evidence found by *Good Hope* revisiting Orange Bay on 7th October that *Dresden* had been there 11th September, and there are indications that *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* may be joined by *Nürnberg*, *Dresden* and *Leipzig* I intend to concentrate at Falkland Islands and avoid



PAPEETE SEAPORT OF THE SOCIETY ISLANDS

EN 4

On September 22 1914 Admiral von Spee and his squadron arrived at Papeete a small seaport on the north-west coast of Tahiti The German ships opened fire upon the town and after destroying about half of it, and sinking a small French gunboat, disappeared once more steering on a northerly course

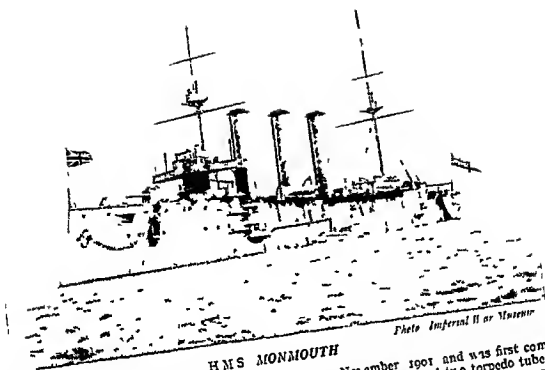


Photo Imperial War Museum

HMS MONMOUTH

The old cruiser *Monmouth* was launched on the Clyde in November 1901 and was first commissioned in 1903. She mounted fourteen 6-inch guns, and in addition had two torpedo tubes. At the outbreak of war in 1914 *Monmouth* was attached to Admiral Cradock's squadron and took part with him in the search for von Spee. At the action off Coronel on November 1, 1914 *Monmouth* went down with all hands and with her flag flying.

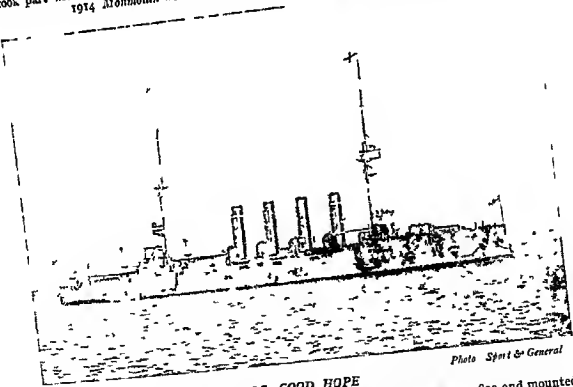


Photo Spott & General

HMS GOOD HOPE

Good Hope was Admiral Cradock's flagship at Coronel. She was launched in 1899 and mounted two 9.2 inch sixteen 6-inch and twelve 12 pounder guns. Like *Monmouth*, she was quickly battered by fire from the German ships but continued in action for several hours until going down with Admiral Cradock and all hands. The loss of *Good Hope* and *Monmouth* apart from the heavy casualties involved, was not a serious matter, as the ships were old and to some extent out of date.

division of forces I have ordered *Canopus* to proceed there, and *Monmouth*, *Glasgow* and *Otranto* not to go farther north than Valparaíso until German cruisers are located again.

"With reference to Admiralty telegram No 74, does *Defence* join my command?"

Renewed Threat to South America

This was an important telegram. It showed a strong probability that the enemy was concentrating with the intention to fight. In these circumstances we must clearly concentrate too. I now looked at the Staff telegram of October 5, and thought it was not sufficiently explicit on the vital point, viz concentration for battle. In order that there should be no mistake, I wrote across the back of Admiral Cradock's telegram, received on October 12, the following minute —

First Sea Lord

In these circumstances it would be best for the British ships to keep within supporting distance of one another, whether in the Straits or near the Falklands, and to postpone the cruise along the West Coast until the present uncertainty about *Scharnhorst*-*Gneisenau* is cleared up.

They and not the trade are our quarry for the moment. Above all, we must not miss them. W S C

The First Sea Lord the same evening added the word "Settled."

On October 14 I discussed the whole situation which was developing with the First Sea Lord, and in accordance with my usual practice I sent him a minute after the conversation of what I understood was decided between us.

First Sea Lord

I understood from our conversation that the dispositions you proposed for the South Pacific and South Atlantic were as follows —

(1) Cradock to concentrate at the Falklands *Canopus*, *Monmouth*, *Good Hope* and *Otranto*.

(2) To send *Glasgow* round to look for *Leipzig* and attack, and protect trade on the West Coast of South America as far north as Valparaíso.

(3) *Defence* to join *Carnarvon* in forming a new combat squadron on the great trade route from Rio.

(4) *Albion* to join the flag of C-in-C Cape for the protection of the Ludenz Bay expedition.

These arrangements have my full approval.

Will you direct the Chief of the Staff to have a statement prepared showing the dates by which these dispositions will be completed, and the earliest date at which *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* could arrive in the respective spheres.

I presume Admiral Cradock is fully aware of the possibility of *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* arriving on or after the 17th instant in his neighbourhood, and that if not strong enough to attack, he will do his utmost to shadow them, pending the arrival of reinforcements.

Rear-Admiral Cradock ordered to Concentrate.

The following telegram was sent to Admiral Cradock at the same time —

Admiralty to Rear-Admiral Cradock

October 14

Concur in your concentration of *Canopus*, *Good Hope*, *Glasgow*, *Monmouth*, *Otranto*, for combined operation.

We have ordered Stoddart in *Carnarvon* to Montevideo as Senior Naval Officer north of that place.

Have ordered *Defence* to join *Carnarvon*.

He will also have under his orders *Cornwall*, *Bristol*, *Orama* and *Macedonia*. *Essex* is to remain in West Indies.

On the 18th Admiral Cradock telegraphed —

"I consider it possible that *Karlsruhe* has been driven West, and is to join the other five. I trust circumstances will enable me to force an action, but fear that strategically, owing to *Canopus*, the speed of my squadron cannot exceed 12 knots."

Thus it is clear that up to this date the Admiral fully intended to keep concentrated on the *Canopus*, even though his squadron speed should be reduced to 12 knots. Officially the *Canopus* could steam from 16 to 17 knots. Actually in the operations she steamed 15½.

The Relative Forces

Let us now examine the situation which was developing.¹ The *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau* were drawing near the south coast of America. On the way they might be met by the light cruisers *Leipzig*, *Dresden* and *Nürnberg*. The squadron which might thus be formed would be entirely composed of fast modern ships. The two large cruisers were powerful vessels. They carried each eight 8-inch guns arranged in pairs on the upper deck, six of which were capable of firing on either beam. Both ships being on permanent foreign service were fully manned with the highest class of German crews, and they had, in fact, only recently distinguished themselves as among the best shooting ships of the whole German Navy.

Against these two vessels and their attendant light cruisers, Admiral Cradock had the *Good Hope* and the *Monmouth*. The *Good Hope* was a fine old ship from the Third Fleet with a 9.2-inch gun at either end and a battery of sixteen 6-inch guns amidships. She had exceptionally good speed (23 knots) for a vessel of her date. Her crew consisted mainly of reservists, and though she had good gunlayers she could not be expected to compare in gunnery efficiency with the best manned ships either in the British or German Navies. The *Monmouth* was one of the numerous County class against which Fisher had so often inveighed—a large ship with good speed but light armour, and carrying nothing heavier than a battery of fourteen 6-inch guns, of which nine could fire on the beam. These two British armoured cruisers had little chance in an action against the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*. No gallantry or devotion could make amends for the disparity in strength, to say nothing of gunnery. If brought to battle only the greatest good fortune could save them from destruction.

It was for this reason that the moment the Admiralty began to apprehend the possibility of the arrival of the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* on the South American station, we sent a capital ship to reinforce Admiral Cradock. Our first inten-

tion had been to send the *Indomitable* from the Dardanelles, and at one time she had already reached Gibraltar on her way to South America when increasing tension with Turkey forced her to return to the Dardanelles. As we did not conceive ourselves able to spare a single battle-cruiser from the Grand Fleet at that time, there was nothing for it but to send an old battleship, and by the end of September the *Canopus* was already steaming from Abrolhos rocks through the South Atlantic.

Importance of the Battleship
Canopus

With the *Canopus*, Admiral Cradock's squadron was safe. The *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* would never have ventured to come within decisive range of her four 12-inch guns. To do so would have been to subject themselves to very serious damage without any prospect of success. The old battleship, with her heavy armour and artillery was, in fact, a citadel around which all our cruisers in those waters could find absolute security. It was for this reason that the Admiralty had telegraphed on September 14 "Keep at least *Canopus* and one County class with your flagship", and again, on October 5 "Canopus should accompany *Glasgow*, *Monmouth* and *Otranto*". It was for this reason that I was glad to read Admiral Cradock's telegram "Have ordered *Canopus* to Falkland Islands, where I intend to concentrate and avoid division of forces," on which I minuted "In these circumstances it would be best for the British ships to keep within supporting distance of one another, whether in the Straits or near the Falklands", and it was for this same reason that the Admiralty telegraphed on October 14 "Concur in your concentration of *Good Hope*, *Canopus*, *Monmouth*, *Glasgow*, *Otranto* for combined operation."

It was quite true that the speed of the *Canopus* was, in fact, only fifteen and a half knots, and that as long as our cruisers had to take her about with them they could not hope to catch the Germans. All the *Canopus* could do was to prevent the Germans catching and killing them. But that would not be the

¹ The table of ships on page 416 will be found useful.

end of the story, it would only be its beginning. When the Germans reached the South American coast after their long voyage across the Pacific, they would have to coal and take in supplies. They were bound to try to find some place where colliers could meet them, and where they could refit and revictual. The moment they were located, either by one of our light cruisers or reported from the shore, the uncertainty of their whereabouts was at an end. We could instantly concentrate upon them from many quarters.

First Combination against Admiral von Spee

The Japanese battleship *Hizen* and cruiser *Izumo*, with the British light cruiser *Newcastle*, were moving southward across the Northern Pacific towards the coast of South America—a force also not capable of catching the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, but too strong to be attacked by them. On the east coast of South America was Rear-Admiral Stoddart's squadron with the powerful modern armoured cruiser *Defence*, with two more County class

cruisers, *Carnarvon* (7.5-inch guns) and *Cornwall*, the light cruiser *Bristol*, and the armed merchant cruisers *Macedonia* and *Orama*. All these ships could be moved by a single order into a common concentration against the German squadron the moment we knew where they were, and meanwhile, so long as he kept within supporting distance of the *Canopus*, Admiral Cradock could have cruised safely up the Chilean coast, keeping the Germans on the move and always falling back on his battleship if they attempted to attack him.

The *Good Hope* and *Monmouth* steaming together were scarcely inferior in designed speed to the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, and these last had been long at sea. Admiral Cradock could, therefore, have kept on observing the Germans, disturbing them, provoking them and drawing them on to the *Canopus*. Moreover, in the *Glasgow* he had a light cruiser which was much superior in speed to the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, and superior both in strength and speed to any one of the German light cruisers concerned.

I cannot therefore accept for the

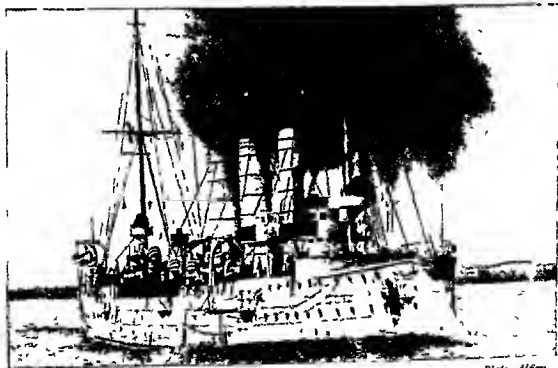
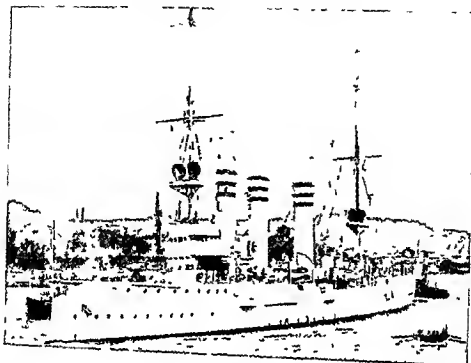


Photo Alfieri

THE GERMAN CRUISER LEIPZIG

The *Leipzig* formed part of Admiral von Spee's squadron. Her displacement was 3,200 tons and her armament consisted of ten 4.2-inch guns. *Leipzig* took part in the fight at Coronel but at the battle of the Falkland Islands in preparation for which the British Admiralty had left nothing to chance, she shared the fate of *Scharnhorst*, *Gneisenau* and *Nürnberg*.



THE GERMAN CRUISER NURNBERG

Photo Sport & General

Built at Kiel and launched in 1903 *Nurnberg* mounted ten 4 1/2-inch and fourteen smaller guns. Like the *Leipzig* she fought at Coronel, but at the Falkland Islands she went down with nearly her full complement of officers and men.

Admiralty any share in the responsibility for what followed. The first rule of war is to concentrate superior strength for decisive action and to avoid division of forces or engaging in detail. The Admiral showed by his telegrams that he clearly appreciated this. The Admiralty orders explicitly approved his assertion of these elementary principles. We were not, therefore, anxious about the safety of Admiral Cradock's squadron. A more important and critical situation would arise, if in cruising up the west coast of South America with his concentrated force Admiral Cradock missed the Germans altogether, and if they passed to the southward of him through the Straits of Magellan or round the Horn, refuelling there in some secret bay, and so came on to the great trade route from Rio. Here they would find Admiral Stoddart, whose squadron when concentrated, though somewhat faster and stronger than the Germans, had not much to spare in either respect. It was for this reason that I had deprecated in my minute of October 12 Admiral Cradock's movement up the west coast and would have been glad to see him

remaining near the Straits of Magellan, where he could either bar the path of the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau*, or manoeuvre to join forces with Admiral Stoddart. However, I rested content with the decisions conveyed in the Admiralty telegram of October 14, and awaited events.

Rear-Admiral Cradock's Disquieting Telegram

Suddenly, on October 27, there arrived a telegram from Admiral Cradock which threw me into perplexity —

Rear-Admiral Cradock to Admiralty Good Hope 26th October, 7 p.m. At sea

Admiralty telegram received 7th October. With reference to orders to search for enemy and our great desire for early success, I consider that owing to slow speed of *Canopus* it is impossible to find and destroy enemy's squadron.

Have therefore ordered *Defence* to join me after calling for orders at Montevideo. Shall employ *Canopus* on necessary work of convoying colliers.

Were then in the throes of the change in the office of First Sea Lord, and I was

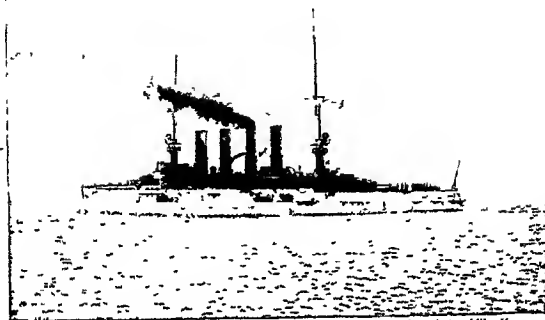


Photo Imperial War Museum

SCHARNHORST FLAGSHIP OF ADMIRAL VON SPEE

The *Scharnhorst* was launched at Hamburg in 1907. She mounted eight 8.2-inch, six 5.9-inch and twenty-four smaller guns. Flagship of Admiral von Spee, she took a prominent part in the German victory off Coronel, but at the Falkland Islands battle she was unable to withstand the concentrated fire of the British battle cruisers *Invincible* and *Inflexible*. About two hours after action had been joined, at 3.30 p.m., on December 8, 1914, *Scharnhorst* was on fire and two of her funnels had been shot away. At 4.17 p.m., crippled and burning, she went down with every soul on board.

gravely preoccupied with the circumstances and oppositions attending the appointment of Lord Fisher. But for this fact I am sure I should have reacted much more violently against the ominous sentence "Shall employ *Canopus* on necessary work of convoying colliers." As it was I minuted to the Naval Secretary (Admiral Oliver) as follows —

"This telegram is very obscure, and I do not understand what Admiral Cradock intends and wishes."

I was reassured by his reply on October 29 —

"The situation on the West Coast seems safe. If *Gneisenau* and *Scharnhorst* have gone north they will meet eventually *Idzumo*, *Newcastle* and *Hizen* moving south, and will be forced south on *Glasgow* and *Monmouth* who have good speed and can keep touch and draw them south on to *Good Hope* and *Canopus*, who should keep within supporting distance of each other."

His Cruise up the Chilean Coast without the *Canopus*

The half fear which had begun to grow in my mind that perhaps the Admiral would go and fight without the *Canopus*, which I thought was so improbable that I did not put it on paper, was allayed. It would, of course, be possible for him to manœuvre forty or fifty miles ahead of the *Canopus* and still close her before fighting. To send the *Defence* to join Admiral Cradock would have left Admiral Stoddart in a hopeless inferiority. Indeed, in a few hours arrived Admiral Stoddart's protest of October 29 —

"I have received orders from Admiral Cradock to send *Defence* to Montevideo to coal, obtain charts, and to await further orders."

"Submit I may be given two fast cruisers in place of *Defence*, as I do not consider force at my disposal sufficient."

The Admiralty Staff had, however,

already replied in accordance with all our decisions —

Admiralty to Rear-Admiral Cradock
(Sent October 28, 1914, 6 45 p m)

Defence is to remain on East Coast under orders of Stoddart

This will leave sufficient force on each side in case the hostile cruisers appear there on the trade routes

There is no ship available for the Cape Horn vicinity

Japanese battleship *Hizen* shortly expected on North American coast, she will join with Japanese *Idzumo* and *Newcastle* and move south towards Galapagos

But neither this nor any further message reached Admiral Cradock. He had taken his own decision. Without waiting for the *Defence*, even if we had been able to send her, and leaving the *Canopus* behind to guard the colliers, he was already steaming up the Chilean coast. But though he left the invulnerable *Canopus* behind because she was too slow, he took with him the helpless armed merchant cruiser *Otranto*,

which was scarcely any faster. He was thus ill-fitted either to fight or run.

He telegraphed to us from off Vallenar at 4 p m on October 27 (received November 1, 4 33 a m) —

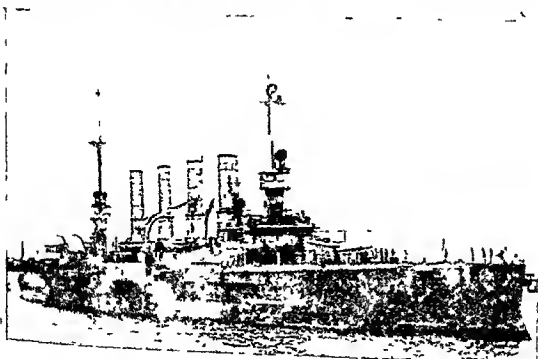
"Have received your telegram 105. Have seized German mails *Monmouth*, *Good Hope* and *Otranto* coaling at Vallenar. *Glasgow* patrolling vicinity of Coronel to intercept German shipping rejoining flag later on. I intend to proceed northward secretly with squadron after coaling and to keep out of sight of land. Until further notice continue telegraphing to Montevideo."

And at noon on October 29 (received November 1, 7 40 a m) —

"Until further notice mails for Rear-Admiral Cradock, *Good Hope*, *Canopus*, *Monmouth*, *Glasgow*, *Otranto*, should be forwarded to Valparaiso."

The inclusion of the *Canopus* in the middle of the latter message seemed to indicate the Admiral's intention to work in combination with the *Canopus* even if not actually concentrated. These were the last messages received from him.

On October 30 Lord Fisher became



Pict. Henscheler Illustr. 1011

THE GERMAN CRUISER GNEISENAU

Sister ship of the *Scharnhorst*, *Gneisenau* shared the same fate at the battle of the Falkland Islands. Subjected to the fire of the British battle cruisers set on fire and badly damaged, she opened her sea-cocks, and at about six o'clock in the evening heeled over and went to the bottom. Ninety-four officers and men of her complement of eight hundred were picked up by the British ships.

First Sea Lord As soon as he entered the Admiralty I took him to the War Room and went over with him on the great map the positions and tasks of every vessel in our immense organization It took more than two hours The critical point was clearly in South American waters Speaking of Admiral Cradock's position, I said, "You don't suppose he would try to fight them without the *Canopus*?" He did not give any decided reply

Certain News of the Enemy's Arrival

Early on November 3 we got our first certain news of the Germans

Consul-General, Valparaiso, to Admiralty
(Sent 5 20 p m, 2nd November
Received 3 10 a m, 3rd November)

Master of Chilean merchant vessel reports that on 1st November 1 p m he was stopped by *Nürnberg* 5 miles off Cape Carranza about 62 miles north of Talcahuano Officers remained on board 45 minutes Two other German cruisers lay west about 5 and 10 miles respectively Master believes one of these was *Scharnhorst* On 26th October, 1 p m *Leipzig* called at Mas-a-Fuera having crew 456 and 10 guns, 18 days out from Galapagos She was accompanied by another cruiser name unknown They brought oxen and left same day On 29th October unknown warship was seen in lat 33 south, long 74 west, steaming towards Coquimbo

Here at last was the vital message for which the Admiralty Staff had waited so long Admiral von Spee's squadron was definitely located on the west coast of South America He had not slipped past Admiral Cradock round the Horn as had been possible For the moment Admiral Stoddart was perfectly safe With the long Peninsula of South America between him and the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, there was no longer any need for him to keep the *Defence* She could join Cradock for what we must hope would be an early battle After surveying the new situation we telegraphed to Admiral Stoddart as follows —

(Sent 6 20 p m, 3rd November)

Defence to proceed with all possible

dispatch to join Admiral Cradock on West Coast of America Acknowledge

Admiralty Measures

This telegram was initialled by Admiral Sturdee, Lord Fisher and myself We telegraphed at the same time to the Japanese Admiralty —

Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, Nürnberg, Leipzig, Dresden have been located near Valparaiso coaling and provisioning This squadron is presumably concentrated for some serious operation We are concentrating *Glasgow, Good Hope, Canopus, Monmouth*, and *Defence* on the S W coast of South America, hoping to bring them to battle We hope that the Japanese Admiralty may now find it possible to move some of their squadrons eastward in order to intercept the German squadron and prevent its return to Asiatic or Australian waters

We indicate our views in order to obtain yours and to concert common action

We also telegraphed to Admiral Cradock once more reiterating the instructions about the *Canopus* —

(Sent 6 55 p m, 3rd November)

Defence has been ordered to join your flag with all dispatch *Glasgow* should find or keep in touch with the enemy You should keep touch with *Glasgow* concentrating the rest of your squadron including *Canopus* It is important you should effect your junction with *Defence* at earliest possible moment subject to keeping touch with *Glasgow* and enemy Enemy supposes you at Corcovados Bay Acknowledge

But we were already talking to the void

News of the Action off Coronel

When I opened my boxes at 7 o'clock on the morning of November 4, I read the following telegram —

Maclean, Valparaiso, to Admiralty (Sent November 3, 1914, 6 10 p m)

Have just learnt from Chilean Admiral that German Admiral states that on Sunday at sunset, in thick and wicked weather, his ships met *Good Hope, Glasgow, Monmouth*, and *Otranto* Action

was joined, and *Monmouth* turned over and sank after about an hour's fighting.

Good Hope, *Glasgow* and *Otranto* drew off into darkness.

Good Hope was on fire, an explosion was heard, and she is believed to have sunk.

Gneisenau, *Scharnhorst* and *Nürnberg* were among the German ships engaged.

The Meeting of the Squadrons

The story of what had happened, so far as it ever can be known, is now familiar, it is fully set out in the official history, and need only be summarized here. Arrived on the Chilean coast, having refuelled at a lonely island, and hearing that the British light cruiser *Glasgow* was at Coronel, Admiral von Spee determined to make an attempt to cut her off, and with this intention steamed southward on November 1 with his whole squadron. By good fortune the *Glasgow* left harbour before it was too late. Almost at the same moment, Admiral Cradock began his sweep northward, hoping to catch the *Leipzig*, whose wireless had been heard repeatedly by the *Glasgow*. He was rejoined by the *Glasgow* at half-past two, and the whole squadron proceeded northward abreast about fifteen miles apart.

At about half-past four the smoke of several vessels was seen to the northward, and in another quarter of an hour the *Glasgow* was able to identify the *Scharnhorst*, *Gneisenau* and a German light cruiser. The *Canopus* was nearly 300 miles away. Was there still time to refuse action? Undoubtedly there was. The *Good Hope* and *Monmouth* had normal speeds of 23 knots and 22.4 respectively and could certainly steam 21 knots in company that day. The *Glasgow* could steam over 25. The *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* had normal speeds of 23.2 and 23.5, but they had been long in southern seas and out of dock. On the knowledge he possessed at that moment Admiral Cradock would have been liberal in allowing them 22 knots. Rough weather would reduce speeds equally on both sides. Had he turned at once and by standing out to sea offered a stern chase to the enemy, he could only be over-

hauled one knot each hour. When the enemy was sighted by the *Glasgow* at 4.45, the nearest armoured ships were about 20 miles apart. There were scarcely two hours to sundown and less than three to darkness.

But the *Otranto* was a possible complication. She could only steam 18 knots, and against the head sea during the action she did in fact only steam 15 knots. As this weak, slow ship had been for some unexplained reason sent on ahead with the *Glasgow*, she was at the moment of sighting the enemy only 17 miles distant. Assuming that Admiral von Spee could steam 22 knots, less 3 for the head sea, i.e. 19, he would overhaul the *Otranto* 4 knots an hour. On this he might have brought her under long-range fire as darkness closed in. To that extent she reduced the speed of the British squadron and diminished their chances of safety. This may have weighed with Admiral Cradock.

We now know, of course, that in spite of being cumbered with the *Otranto* he could, as it happened, easily and certainly have declined action had he attempted to do so. At the moment of being sighted, Admiral von Spee had only steam for 14 knots, and had to light two more boilers to realize his full speed. Further, his ships were dispersed. To concentrate and gain speed took an hour and a half off the brief daylight during which the British ships would actually have been increasing their distance. Moreover, in the chase and battle of the Falklands the greatest speed ever developed by the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* did not exceed 20 knots in favourable weather. There is therefore no doubt he could have got away untouched.

But nothing was farther from the mind of Admiral Cradock. He instantly decided to attack. As soon as the *Glasgow* had sighted the enemy, she had turned back towards the flagship, preceded by the *Monmouth* and the *Otranto* all returning at full speed. But Admiral Cradock at 5.10 ordered the squadron to concentrate, not on his flagship the *Good Hope*, the farthest ship from the enemy, but on the *Glasgow*, which though retreating rapidly was still the nearest.

At 6.18 he signalled to the distant *Canopus* "I am now going to attack enemy" The decision to fight sealed his fate, and more than that, the fate of the squadron

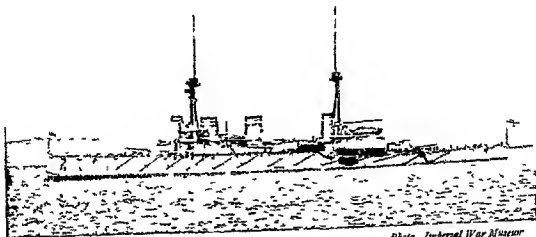
**The British Attack the Germans—
Destruction of the *Good Hope* and
*Monmouth***

To quote the log of the *Glasgow*, "The British Squadron turned to port four points together towards the enemy with a view to closing them and forcing them to action before sunset, which, if successful, would have put them at a great disadvantage owing to the British squadron being between the enemy and the sun" The German Admiral easily evaded this manoeuvre by turning away towards the land and keeping at a range of at least 18,000 yards

Both squadrons were now steaming southward on slightly converging courses—the British to seaward with the setting sun behind them, and the Germans nearer the land. And now began the saddest naval action in the war. Of the officers and men in both the squadrons that faced each other in these stormy seas so far from home, nine out of ten were doomed to perish. The British were to die that night; the Germans a month later.

At 7 o'clock the sun sank beneath the horizon, and the German Admiral, no longer dazzled by its rays, opened fire. The British ships were silhouetted against the afterglow, while the Germans were hardly visible against the dark background of the Chilean coast. A complete reversal of advantage had taken place. The sea was high, and the main deck 6-inch guns both of the *Monmouth* and of the *Good Hope* must have been much affected by the dashing spray. The German batteries, all mounted in modern fashion on the upper deck, suffered no corresponding disadvantage from the rough weather.

The unequal contest lasted less than an hour. One of the earliest German salvos probably disabled the *Good Hope's* forward 9.2-inch gun, which was not fired throughout the action. Both she and the *Monmouth* were soon on fire. Darkness came on and the sea increased in violence till the *Good Hope*, after a great explosion, became only a glowing speck which was presently extinguished, and the *Monmouth*, absolutely helpless but refusing to surrender, was destroyed by the *Nürnberg*, and foundered, like her consort, with her flag still flying. The *Ohranto*, an unarmoured merchantman, quite incapable of taking part in the action, rightly held her distance and disappeared into the gloom. Only the little



HMS INVINCIBLE

Photo: Imperial War Museum

One of the two battle-cruisers specially detailed to deal with von Spee's squadron in 1914. *Invincible's* armament consisted of eight 12-inch and sixteen 4-inch guns. She could steam at 25 knots. Together with the *Infesible*, her presence at the Falkland Islands proved decisive, but eighteen months later, at Jutland she was sunk by gunfire going down with all hands.

Glasgow, which miraculously escaped fatal damage among the heavy salvos, continued the action until she was left alone in the darkness on the stormy seas. There were no survivors from the two British ships all perished, from Admiral to seaman. The Germans had no loss of life.

Escape of the *Glasgow*.

Quoth the *Glasgow* in her subsequent report —

" Throughout the engagement the conduct of officers and men was entirely admirable. Perfect discipline and coolness prevailed under trying circumstances of receiving considerable volume of fire without being able to make adequate return. The men behaved exactly as though at battle practice, there were no signs of wild fire, and when the target was invisible the gunlayers ceased firing of their own accord. Spirit of officers and ship's company of *Glasgow* is entirely unimpaired by serious reverse in which they took part, and that the ship may be quickly restored to a condition in which she

can take part in further operations against the same enemy is the unanimous wish of us all "

This as it happened they were not to be denied.

Reflections upon the Admiralty Examined

Surveying this tragic episode in the light of after knowledge, the official historian has blamed the Admiralty on various grounds first, for dividing the

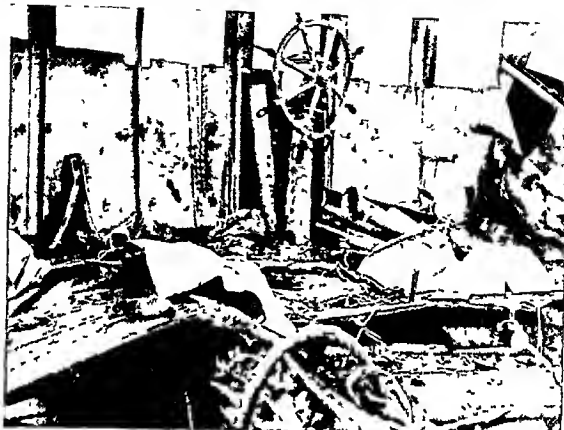


Photo Elliott & Fry

ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET SIR DOVETON STURDEE

Frederick Charles Doveton Sturdee entered the Royal Navy in 1871. In 1914 he was Chief of the War Staff at the Admiralty, and after the disaster to Admiral Cradock's squadron off Coronel, Sturdee was appointed to command the strong squadron concentrated to dispose of the German ships. At Jutland Sturdee was in command of the fourth battle squadron.

available force into two inadequate squadrons under Admiral Cradock and Admiral Stoddart, secondly, for a lack of explicitness in the wording of the Staff telegrams. I cannot admit that the first charge is in any way justified. It would, of course, have been much simpler to have concentrated the squadrons of Admiral Cradock and Admiral Stoddart in the Straits of Magellan and awaited events. But until we knew for certain



THE EMDEN AFTER THE FIGHT WITH HMAS SYDNEY Photo L 14

The action fought off the Cocos Islands between the Australian ship *Sydney* and the *Emden* lasted only one hour and forty minutes. The above photograph shows some of the damage inflicted upon the German raider. An account of the action is given on page 410.

that the German cruisers were coming to South America, there was a great disadvantage in denuding the main trade route from Rio of all protection. Suppose we had done this and Admiral von Spee had remained, as he could easily have done, for many weeks at Easter Island, or anywhere else in the Pacific, the whole of the Plate trade would then, for all we knew, have been at the mercy of the *Karlsruhe* or of any other German commerce destroyer. At least six different courses were open to von Spee, and we had, while our resources were at the fullest strain, to meet every one of them.

Suppose, for instance, he had gone northward to the Panama Canal and, passing swiftly through, had entered the West Indies—of what use would be our concentration in the Straits of Magellan? The reasoning and state of mind which would have led to such a concentration would have involved a virtual suspension of our enterprises all over the world. We could not afford to do that. We decided deliberately in October to carry on our protection of trade in every theatre in

spite of the menace of the unlocated *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, and to do this by means of squadrons which, though they would not be homogeneous in speed and class, were in every case if held together capable of fighting the enemy with good prospects of success. This was true of the Anglo-Japanese squadron. It was true of the escort of the Australian convoy. It was true of Admiral Stoddart. Most of all was it true of Admiral Cradock. The last word in such an argument was surely spoken by Admiral von Spee. "The English," he wrote the day after the battle, "have here another ship like the *Monmouth*, and also it seems a battleship of the *Queen* type, with 12-inch guns. Against this last-named we can hardly do anything. If they had kept their forces together we should, I suppose, have got the worst of it."

So far as the clarity of the Staff telegrams is concerned, no doubt here and there the wording of naval messages had not been sufficiently precise, and this fault ran through much of the Naval

Staff work in those early days, but on the main point nothing could have been more emphatic, nor, indeed, should any emphasis have been needed. It ought not to be necessary to tell an experienced Admiral to keep concentrated and not to be brought to action in circumstances of great disadvantage by superior forces. Still, even this was done, and in telegram after telegram the importance of not being separated from the *Canopus*, especially sent him for his protection, was emphasized.

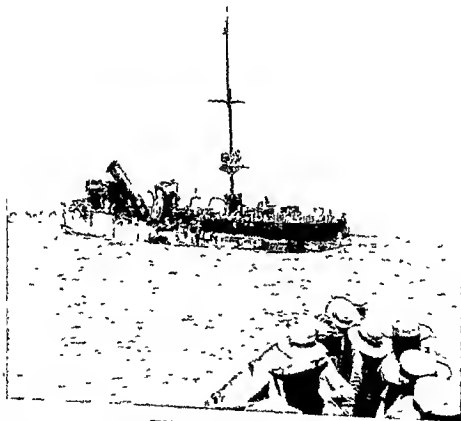
Lastly, the official historian has represented the new decision to reinforce Cradock by the *Defence* as a reversal by Lord Fisher of the mistaken policy hitherto pursued.

"By the time it (Admiral Cradock's telegram of 31st) reached the Admiralty the new Board was installed with Lord Fisher as First Sea Lord, and one of their

first acts was an effort to improve the precarious position in which Admiral Cradock found himself. The *Defence* was immediately ordered to join him."

This is unjust both to Prince Louis and to Admiral Sturdee. It was not possible to order the superior concentration until the enemy had been located, and such concentration would have been ordered by any Board the moment the uncertainty was cleared up. The official historian would not have fallen into this error in a work distinguished for its care and industry, if he had mentioned the telegram from the Consul-General, Valparaiso, which was received on the morning of the 31st, or if he had noticed that although the position in South American waters was known to Lord Fisher on October 30, no fresh dispositions

¹ *Official History of the War Naval Operations* Vol I, p. 344



THE LAST OF THE EMDEN

Photo Central News

Battered and crumpled up the famous German raider is seen here ashore on North Keeling Island. The photograph was taken from the cutter seen in the foreground which is proceeding to take off the survivors. An officer who boarded the *Emden* with the rescue party describing the scene on board stated that 'with the exception of the fore-castle, which is hardly touched she is nothing but a shambles.'

were made or could be made until the whereabouts of the enemy was clearly ascertained. Then and not till then could we strip Admiral Stoddart or inform Admiral Cradock that the *Defence* was hurrying to join him.

An Explanation of Rear-Admiral Cradock's Action

So far as Admiral Cradock is concerned, I cannot do better than repeat the words which I wrote at the time and which commanded the recorded assent both of Lord Fisher and of Sir Arthur Wilson.

Draft of an answer to a Parliamentary question not subsequently put

SIR,—As I have already said, I did not think it convenient to go into this matter, but since it is pressed I will state that the *Canopus* was sent from St. Vincent to join Admiral Cradock's flag on September 4th, as soon as the possibility of the arrival of the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* on the West Coast of South America could be taken into account. On October 12th Admiral Cradock telegraphed to the Admiralty that the indications showed the possibility of *Dresden*, *Leipzig*, and *Nürnberg* joining *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, and that he had ordered *Canopus* to Falkland Islands, where he intended to concentrate and avoid division of forces, and on October 14th the Admiralty approved specifically by telegram Admiral Cradock's proposed concentration of *Good Hope*, *Monmouth*, *Canopus*, *Glasgow*, and *Otranto* for combined operations. The squadron thus formed was amply strong enough to defeat the enemy if attacked by them. It was not fast enough to force an engagement, but in view of the uncertainty as to which part of the world the enemy's squadron would appear in, it was not possible at that time to provide another strong fast ship at that particular point.

Admiral Cradock was an experienced and fearless officer, and we are of opinion that feeling that he could not bring the enemy immediately to action as long as he kept with the *Canopus*, he decided to attack them with his fast ships alone, in the belief that even if he himself were

destroyed in the action, he would inflict damage upon them which in the circumstances would be irreparable, and lead to their certain subsequent destruction. This was not an unreasonable hope, and though the Admiralty have no responsibility for Admiral Cradock's decision they consider that it was inspired by the highest devotion, and in harmony with the spirit and traditions of the British Navy.

The Alternatives Open to the German Squadron

We had now to meet the new situation. Our combinations, such as they were, were completely ruptured, and Admiral von Spee, now in temporary command of South American waters, possessed a wide choice of alternatives. He might turn back into the Pacific, and repeat the mystery tactics which had been so baffling to us. He might steam northward up the west coast of South America and make for the Panama Canal. In this case he would run a chance of being brought to battle by the Anglo-Japanese Squadron which was moving southward.

But, of course, he might not fall in with them, or, if he did, he could avoid battle owing to his superior speed. He might come round to the east coast and interrupt the main trade route. If he did this he must be prepared to fight Admiral Stoddart, but this would be a very even and hazardous combat. Admiral Stoddart had against the two armoured German ships three armoured ships, of which the *Defence*, a later and a better ship than either of the Germans, mounted four 9 2-inch and ten 7 5-inch guns, and was one of our most powerful armoured-cruiser class. Lastly, he might cross the Atlantic, possibly raiding the Falkland Islands on his way, and arrive unexpectedly on the South African coast. Here he would find the Union Government's expedition against the German colony in full progress and his arrival would have been most unwelcome. General Botha and General Smuts, having suppressed the rebellion, were about to resume in a critical atmosphere their attack upon German South-West Africa, and a stream of transports would

soon be flowing with the expedition and its supplies from Cape Town to Luderitz Bay. Subsequently or alternatively to this intrusion, Admiral von Spee might steam up the African coast and strike at the whole of the shipping of the expedition to the Cameroons, which was quite without means of defending itself against him.

Second Combination against Admiral von Spee

All these unpleasant possibilities had to be faced by us. We had to prepare again at each of many points against a sudden blow, and, great as were our resources, the strain upon them became enormous. The first step was to restore the situation in South American waters. This would certainly take a month. My minute of inquiry to the Chief of the Staff, written an hour after I had read the first news of the disaster, will show the possibilities which existed. It will be seen that in this grave need my mind immediately turned to wresting a battle-cruiser from the Grand Fleet which, joined with the *Defence*, *Carnarvon*, *Cornwall* and *Kent*, would give Admiral Stoddart an overwhelming superiority.

4/11/14

Director of Operations Division

1 How far is it, and how long would it take *Dartmouth* and *Weymouth* to reach Punta Arenas, Rio, or Abrolhos respectively, if they started this afternoon with all dispatch?

2 How long would it take—

(a) *Kent* to reach Rio and Abrolhos?

(b) *Australia* (1) without, and (2) with *Montcalm* to reach Galapagos via Makada Islands, and also *Idzumo* and *Newcastle* to reach them?

(c) The Japanese 2nd Southern Squadron to replace *Australia* at Fiji?

(d) *Defence*, *CARNARVON* and *CORNWALL* respectively to reach Punta Arenas?

(e) *INVINCIBLE* to reach Abrolhos, Rio, Punta Arenas?

(f) *Hizen* and *Asama* to reach Galapagos or Esquimalt?

W S C

¹ All the ships in small capitals fought eventually in the battle of the Falkland Islands.

Battle-cruisers *Invincible* and *Inflexible* Ordered to South America

But I found Lord Fisher in a holder mood.

He would take two battle-cruisers from the Grand Fleet for the South American station. More than that, and much more questionable, he would take a third—the *Princess Royal*—for Halifax and later for the West Indies in case von Spee came through the Panama Canal.

There never was any doubt what ought to be sent. The question was what could be spared. We measured up our strength in Home Waters anxiously, observing that the *Tiger* was about to join the 1st Battle-Cruiser Squadron, that the new battleships *Benbow*, *Emperor of India* and *Queen Elizabeth* were practically ready. We sent forthwith the following order to the Commander-in-Chief—

(November 4, 1914, 12 40 p.m.)

Order *Invincible* and *Inflexible* to fill up with coal at once and proceed to Berehaven with all dispatch. They are urgently needed for foreign service. Admiral and Flag-Captain *Invincible* to transfer to New Zealand. Captain *New Zealand* to *Invincible*. *Tiger* has been ordered to join you with all dispatch. Give her necessary orders.

I also telegraphed personally to Sir John Jellicoe as follows—

(November 5, 12 5 a.m.)

From all reports received through German sources, we fear Craddock has been caught or has engaged with only *Monmouth* and *Good Hope* armoured ships against *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*. Probably both British vessels sunk. Position of *Canopus* critical and fate of *Glasgow* and *Otranto* uncertain.

Proximity of concentrated German squadron of five good ships will threaten gravely main trade route Rio to London. Essential recover control.

First Sea Lord requires *Invincible* and *Inflexible* for this purpose.

Sturdee goes Commander-in-Chief, South Atlantic and Pacific.

Oliver, Chief of Staff. Bartolome, Naval Secretary.

Apparently we had not at this stage

decided finally to send the *Princess Royal*. Sir John Jellicoe rose to the occasion and parted with his two battle-cruisers without a word. They were ordered to steam by the west coast to Devonport to fit themselves for their southern voyage. Our plans for the second clutch at von Spee were now conceived as follows¹ —

(1) Should he break across the Pacific, he would be dealt with by the very superior Japanese 1st Southern Squadron, based on Suva to cover Australia and New Zealand, and composed as follows — *Kiutama* (battleship), *Tsukuba* and *Ikoma* (battle-cruisers), *Chikuma* and *Yahagi* (light cruisers). At Suva also were the *Montcalm* and *Encounter*. Another strong Japanese squadron (four ships) was based on the Caroline Islands.

(2) To meet him, should he proceed up the west coast of South America, an Anglo-Japanese Squadron, comprising *Australia* (from Fiji), *Hizen*, *Idzumo*, *Newcastle*, was to be formed off the North American Coast.

(3) Should he come round on to the east coast, *Defence*, *Carnarvon*, *Cornwall*, *Kent* were ordered to concentrate off Monte Video, together with *Canopus*, *Glasgow* and *Bristol*, and not seek action till joined by *Invincible* and *Inflexible*, thereafter sending the *Defence* to South Africa.

(4) Should he approach the Cape station, he would be awaited by *Defence* and also *Minotaur* (released from the Australian convoy, after we knew of von Spee's arrival in South American waters), together with the old battleship *Albion*, and *Weymouth*, *Dartmouth*, *Astraa* and *Hyacinth*, light cruisers. The Union Expedition being postponed for fourteen days.

(5) Should he come through the Panama Canal, he would meet the *Princess Royal*, as well as the *Berwick* and *Lancaster*, of the West Indian Squadron, and the French *Conde*.

(6) Camerons were warned to be ready to take their shipping up the river beyond his reach.

(7) Should he endeavour to work homewards across the South Atlantic, he would come into the area of a new squadron under Admiral de Roheck to be formed near the Cape de Verde Islands, comprising the old battleship *Vengeance*, the strong armoured cruisers *Warrior* and *Black Prince* and the *Donegal*, *Highflyer*, and later *Cumberland*.

Thus to compass the destruction of five warships, only two of which were armoured, it was necessary to employ nearly thirty, including twenty-one armoured ships, the most part of superior metal, and thus took no account of the powerful Japanese Squadrons, and of French ships or of armed merchant cruisers, the last-named effective for scouting.

Arrangements with the Japanese Admiralty

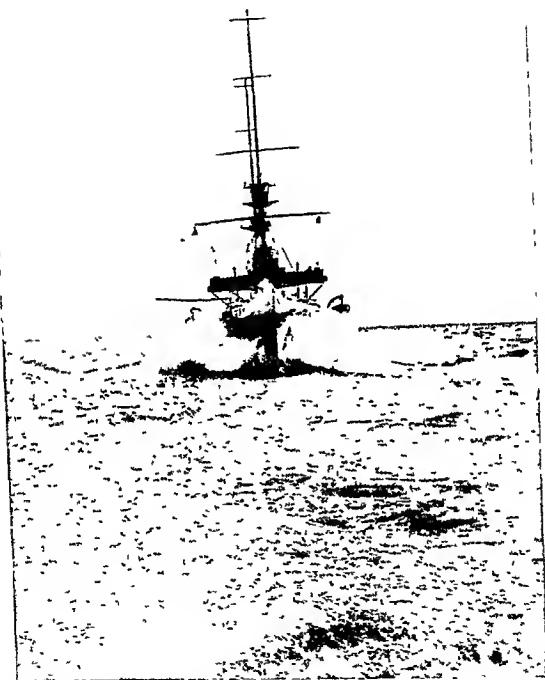
I telegraphed to the Japanese Admiralty as follows —

British Admiralty to Japanese Admiralty

November 5, 1914

In consequence of unsuccessful action off Chih and definite location of German squadron, we have ordered concentration off Montevideo of *Defence*, *Kent*, *Carnarvon* and *Cornwall*. These will be joined with all dispatch by *Invincible* and *Inflexible* battle-cruisers from England, and *Dartmouth* light cruiser from East Africa, and remainder of defeated squadron from Chih. Thus assures the South Atlantic situation. We now desire assistance of Japan in making equally thorough arrangements on Pacific side. We propose for your consideration and friendly advice the following — *Newcastle* and *Idzumo* to go south in company to San Clemente Island off San Diego, California, there to meet *Hizen* from Honolulu. Meanwhile *Asama* will be able to effect internment or destruction of *Geier*. We also propose to move *Australia* battle-cruiser from Fiji to Fanning Island. By the time these moves are complete, probably by November 17, we may know more of *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* movements, and a further concentration of *Australia* and *Asama* with *Hizen*, *Idzumo* and *Newcastle* will be possible either at

¹ Here the reader should certainly look at the map on pages 408 and 409 which deals directly with this situation.



MAKING HEAVY WEATHER

Photo Crib

Not least among the many anxieties which harassed the Admiralty throughout the war was the problem of keeping the ships of the fleet in a state of repair and efficiency. Unlike the German Navy, secure in its harbour the British ships were at sea in all weathers and for lengthy periods. Buffeted by heavy seas, the strain upon the engines and other parts of these great ships was intense, necessitating constant care lest the efficiency of the units of the Grand Fleet should be impaired.

San Clemente or further to the south, further movements depending on the enemy

squadron to advance to Fiji to take the place of the *Austraha*, and so guard Australia and New Zealand in case the Germans return

We should also like a Japanese

With regard to the Indian Ocean and Western Pacific, it is now known that *Emden* is the only enemy ship at large. We therefore hope that the Japanese squadrons and vessels not involved in the eastward movement will draw westward into the vicinity of Sumatra and the Dutch East Indies in order to block every exit and deny every place of shelter up to the 90th meridian of east longitude.

British Admiralty are combining in Indian waters in search of *Emden* the following light cruisers—*Weymouth*, *Gloucester*, *Yarmouth*, *Melbourne*, *Sydney*, and the armoured cruiser *Hampshire* and Russian cruiser *Askold*. These ships will be ready by the middle of November. Thus by concerted action between the Allied fleets the *Emden* should be speedily run down.

Japanese Admiralty to British Admiralty

November 7, 1914

Secret and Private

Japanese Admiralty give their consent generally to strategical scheme proposed and beg to withdraw the proposal of November 6, put forward through Admiral Oguni to the British War Staff. Measures will be taken in vicinity of Sumatra and Dutch East Indies as asked. First Southern Squadron will be dispatched to Fiji, but Japanese Admiralty think that it may be necessary for them to extend their sphere of operations to the Marquesas Islands. With reference to the movements of the *Hizen* and *Asama*, Japanese Admiralty will carry out your wishes as far as possible, bearing in mind necessity of watching the *Geier* until her (?) disposi-

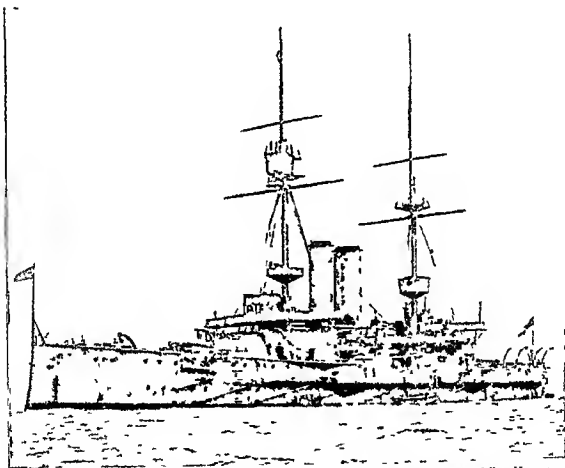


Photo Imperial War Museum

THE SHIP THAT WOULD HAVE SAVED ADMIRAL CRADOCK

HMS *Canopus*, attached to Admiral Cradock's squadron in 1914, was one of an old class of battleship built between 1899 and 1902. She carried four 12 inch twelve 6 inch and twenty smaller guns. It was intended that, although her rate of speed was not adequate, she should be employed as a covering ship for the lighter vessels under Admiral Cradock. Unfortunately, when action was joined off Coronel, *Canopus* was 300 miles away and was therefore unable to carry out the rôle allotted to her by the Admiralty.

tion) is settled, but the *Hizen* will be dispatched at once

With reference to the *Hizen*, *Asama* and *Idzumo*, Japanese Admiralty request British Admiralty to make arrangements necessary for their supply of coal, etc

Meanwhile it had been necessary to provide, as far as possible, for the safety of the surviving ships of Admiral Cradock's squadron and to move the reinforcing ships

Admiralty to H M S "Kent"

(November 4, 1914)

Urgent Proceed to the Abrolhos Rocks with all dispatch and communicate via Rio It is intended you shall join Admiral Stoddart's squadron

*Admiralty to Rear-Admiral Stoddart,
"Carnarvon"*

(November 4, 1914)

In view of reported sinking of *Good Hope* and *Monmouth* by *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* off Coronel, November 1, armoured ships on S E Coast America must concentrate at once *Carnarvon*, *Cornwall* should join *Defence* off Montevideo *Canopus*, *Glasgow*, *Otranto* have been ordered if possible to join you there *Kent* from Sierra Leone also has been ordered to join your flag via Abrolhos Endeavour to get into communication with them Enemy will most likely come on to the Rio trade route Reinforcements will meet you shortly from England

Acknowledge

From Admiralty to "Canopus"

(November 4, 1914)

In view of reported sinking of *Good Hope* and *Monmouth* by *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* on 1st November you should make the best of your way to join *Defence* near Montevideo Keep wide of track to avoid being brought to action by superior force

If attacked, however, Admiralty is confident ship will in all circumstances be fought to the last as imperative to damage enemy whatever may be consequences

*Admiralty to "Glasgow,"
"Otranto"*

(November 4, 1914)

You should make the best of your way to join *Defence* near Montevideo Keep wide of track to avoid being brought to action by superior force

Admiralty to Governor, Falkland Islands
(November 5, 1914)

German cruiser raid may take place All Admiralty colliers should be concealed in unfrequented harbours B ready to destroy supplies useful to enemy and hide codes effectively on enemy ships being sighted Acknowledge

Development of the Second Combination

In a few days we learned that her continuous fast steaming had led to boiler troubles in the *Canopus*, and we had to direct her to the Falklands

Admiralty to "Canopus"

(November 9, 1914, 3 to a m)

You are to remain in Stanley Harbour Moor the ship so that the entrance is commanded by your guns Extemporize mines outside entrance Send down your topmasts and be prepared for bombardment from outside the harbour Stimulate the Governor to organize all local forces and make determined defence Arrange observation stations on shore, by which your fire on ships outside can be directed Land guns or use boats' torpedoes to sink a blocking ship before she reaches the Narrows No objection to your grounding ship to obtain a good berth

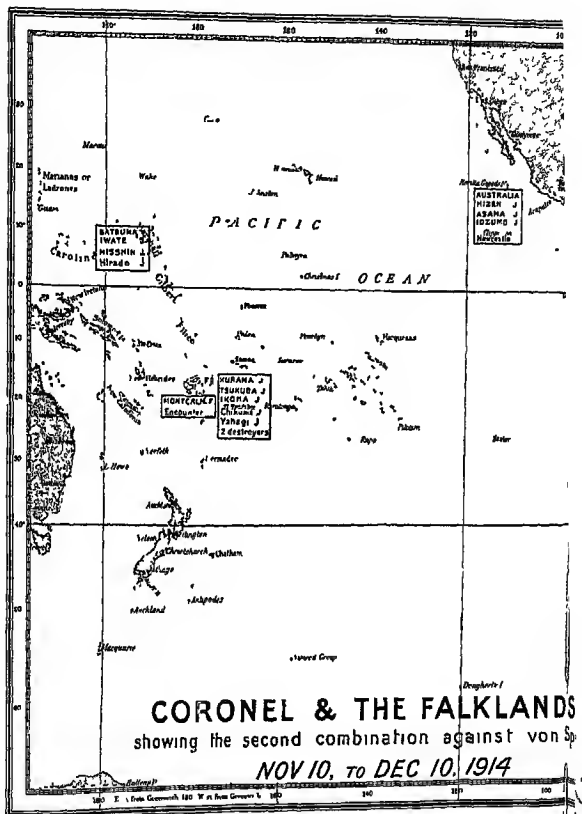
Should *Glasgow* be able to get sufficient start of enemy to avoid capture, send her on to the River Plate, if not, moor her inside *Canopus*

Repair your defects and wait orders¹

British Naval Resources at their Utmost Strain

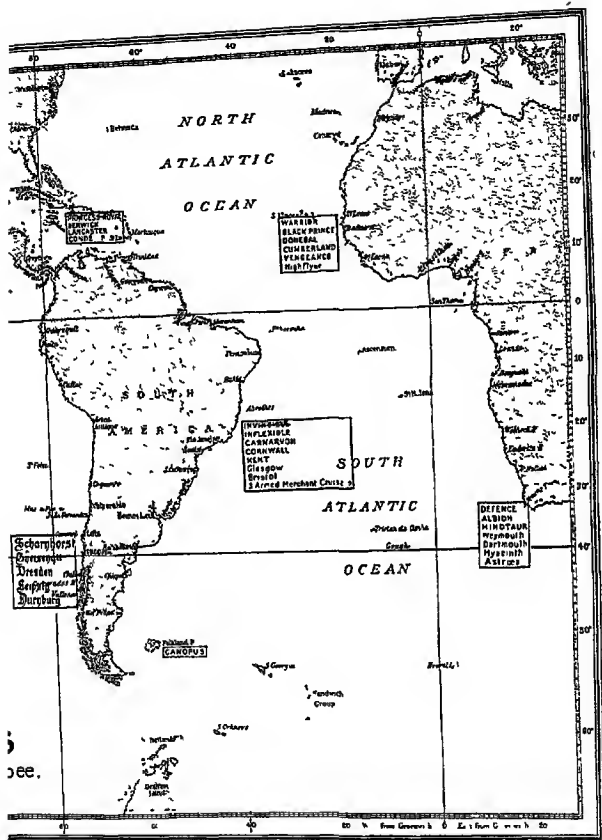
The strain upon British naval resources in the outer seas, apart from the main theatre of naval operations, was now at its maximum, and may be partially

¹ All the above telegrams had to be sent by various routes and most were repeated by several routes as of course we could not communicate direct across these great distances But I omit the procedure to simplify the account



CORONEL AND

This map showing the second combination of British and Allied ships against Admiral von Spee confronted. Many details concerning the movements of the German ships which to day are few isolated reports indicating the presence of von Spee at one point or another all that was Atlantic, steering a lone course on that mighty waste of water was a squadron of German which might at any hour appear where it was least



THE FALKLANDS

Spees' squadron indicates clearly the nature of the problem with which the Admiralty were matter of common knowledge were in 1914 shrouded in obscurity. With the exception of a known or could be assumed by the Admiralty was that somewhere in the Southern Pacific or ships of war ably commanded and manned by some of the finest seamen in the German Navy, expected and where it could inflict the greatest injury.

appreciated from the following approximate enumerations —

- Combination against von Spee, 30 ships
- In search of the *Emden* and *Königsberg*, 8 ships
- General protection of trade by vessels other than the above, 40 ships
- Convoy duty in the Indian Ocean, 8 ships
- Blockade of the Turco-German Fleet at the Dardanelles, 3 ships
- Defence of Egypt, 2 ships
- Miscellaneous minor tasks, 11 ships
- Total, 102 ships of all classes
- We literally could not by our hands

on another vessel of any sort or kind which could be made to play any useful part. But we were soon to have relief.

Already on October 30 news had reached us that the *Königsberg* had been discovered hiding in the Rufiji River in German East Africa, and it was instantly possible to mark her down with two ships of equal value and liberate the others. On November 9 far finer news arrived. The reader will remember for what purposes the *Sydney* and *Melbourne* had been attached to the great Australian convoy which was now crossing the Indian Ocean.

On the 8th, the *Sydney*, cruising ahead of the convoy, took in a message from the wireless station at Cocos Island that a strange ship was entering the Bay. Thereafter, silence from Cocos Island. Thereupon the large cruiser *Ibuki* increased her speed, displayed the war flag of Japan and demanded permission from the British officer in command of the convoy to pursue and attack the enemy. But the convoy could not divest itself of this powerful protection, and the coveted task was accorded to the *Sydney*. At 9 o'clock she sighted the *Emden* and the first sea fight in the history of the Australian Navy began. It could have only one ending. In a hundred minutes the *Emden* was stranded, a flaming mass of twisted metal, and the whole of the Indian Ocean was absolutely safe and free.

In consideration of all the harm this ship had done us without offending against humanity or the laws of sea war as we conceived them, we telegraphed —

Admiral Self to the
Devonport

Ships are to each bevelony
11th They are used for
has some and destroyed
arrangements must be made
to confirm. If necessary
destroyed men who be
sent away in the ship
to return in opportunity
many other. You are
held responsible for the
steady destruction of these
ships in a thorough
effort at completion.

ADMIRALTY ORDER TO C-IN-C DEVONPORT

Admiralty to Commander-in-Chief, China
November 11, 1914

Captain, officers and crew of *Emden* appear to be entitled to all the honours of war Unless you know of any reason to the contrary, Captain and officers should be permitted to retain swords

These martial courtesies were, however, churlishly repaid

Relief in the Indian Ocean

The clearance of the Indian Ocean liberated all those vessels which had been searching for the *Emden* and the *Königsberg*

Nothing could now harm the Australian convoy Most of its escort vanished The *Emden* and the *Königsberg* were accounted for, and von Spee was on the other side of the globe The *Minotaur* had already been ordered with all speed to the Cape All the other vessels went through the Red Sea into the Mediterranean, where their presence was very welcome in view of the impending Turkish invasion of Egypt

Meanwhile the *Invincible* and *Inflexible* had reached Devonport We had decided that Admiral Sturdee on vacating the position of Chief of the Staff should hoist his flag in the *Invincible*, should take command on the South American station, and should assume general control of all the operations against von Spee We were in the highest impatience to get him and his ships away Once vessels fall into dockyard hands, a hundred needs manifest themselves

On November 9, when Lord Fisher was in my room, the following message was put on my table —

"The Admiral Superintendent, Devonport, reports that the earliest possible date for completion of *Invincible* and *Inflexible* is midnight 13th November"

I immediately expressed great discontent with the dockyard delays and asked, "Shall I give him a prog?" or words to that effect Fisher took up the telegram As soon as he saw it he exclaimed, "Friday the thirteenth What a day to choose!" I then wrote and signed the following order, which as it was the direct cause of the Battle of the

Falklands may be reproduced in facsimile¹

ADMIRALTY TO C-IN-C, DEVONPORT

Ships are to sail Wednesday 11th They are needed for war service and dockyard arrangements must be made to conform If necessary dockyard men should be sent away in the ships to return as opportunity may offer You are held responsible for the speedy despatch of these ships in a thoroughly efficient condition Acknowledge

(Signed) W S C

Accelerated Dispatch of the Battle-Cruisers

The ships sailed accordingly and in the nick of time They coaled on November 26 at Ahrolhos, where they joined and absorbed Admiral Stoddart's squadron (*Carnarvon*, *Cornwall*, *Kent*, *Glasgow*, *Bristol* and *Orama*) and dispatched *Defence* to the Cape, and without ever coming in sight of land or using their wireless they reached Port Stanley, Falkland Islands, on the night of December 7 Here they found the *Canopus* in the lagoon, prepared to defend herself and the colony in accordance with the Admiralty instructions They immediately began to coal

* * * *

After his victory at Coronel, Admiral von Spee comported himself with the dignity of a brave gentleman He put aside the fervent acclamations of the German colony of Valparaiso, and spoke no word of triumph over the dead He was under no delusion as to his own danger He said of the flowers which were presented to him, "They will do for my funeral" Generally, his behaviour would lead us to suppose that the inability of the Germans to pick up any British survivors was not due to want of humanity, and this view has been accepted by the British Navy

After a few days at Valparaiso he and his ships vanished again into the blue We do not know what were the reasons which led him to raid the Falkland Islands, nor what his further plans would have been in the event of success.

¹ See page 410



THE FALKLANDS ACTION

The photographs shown here were taken by an officer from the maintop of *Invincible*. In this the first of the series, the British ships are seen preparing to leave the Falkland Islands. Note the tripod mast of the British battle cruiser.

Presumably he hoped to destroy this unfortified British coaling base and so make his own position in South American waters less precarious. At any rate, at noon on December 6, he set off to the eastward from the Straits of Magellan with his five ships, and about 8 o'clock on December 8 his leading ship (the *Gneisenau*) was in sight of the main harbour of the Falklands. A few minutes later a terrible apparition broke upon German eyes. Rising from behind the promontory, sharply visible in the clear air, were a pair of tripod masts. One glance was enough. They meant certain death.¹ The day was beautifully fine and from the tops the horizon extended thirty or forty miles in every direction. There was no hope for victory. There was no chance of escape. A month before, another Admiral and his sailors had

¹ Only Dreadnoughts had tripods.

suffered a similar experience

* * *

Admiral von Spee at the Falklands—
News of the Battle and of Victory

At 5 o'clock that afternoon I was working my room at the Admiralty when Admiral Oliver entered with the following telegram. It was

from the Governor of the Falkland Islands and ran as follows —

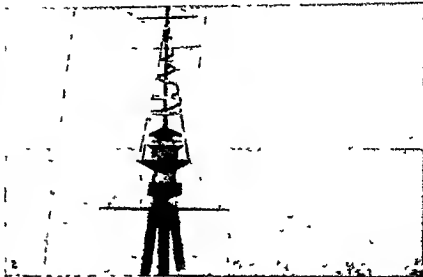
"Admiral Spee arrived at daylight this morning with all his ships and is now in action with Admiral Sturdee's whole fleet, which was coaling."

We had had so many unpleasant surprises that these last words sent a shiver up my spine. Had we been taken by surprise and, in spite of all our superiority, mauled, unready, at anchor? "Can it mean that?" I said to the Chief of the Staff. "I hope not," was all he said. I could see that my suggestion, though I hardly meant it seriously, had dis-



Taken about noon this photograph indicates that the enemy ships are now appreciably closer. Their hulls are in clear view above the horizon.

quieted him. Two hours later, however, the door opened again, and this time the countenance of the stern and sombre Ohlsvorpe something which closely resembled a grin. "It's all right, sir, they are all at the bottom." And with one exception so they were.



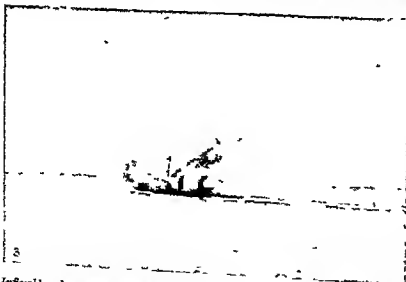
This photograph taken about 10.30 a.m. shows the smoke of the enemy ships on the horizon. The opposing squadrons are still too far apart for any effective action.

* * * *

The Action

When the leading German ships were sighted far away on the distant horizon, Admiral Sturdee and his squadron were indeed coaling. From the intelligence he had received he had convinced himself that the Germans were at Valparaiso, and he intended to sail the next day in the hope of doubling the Horn before the enemy could do so. More than two hours passed after the enemy first came in sight before he could raise steam and get under way. The first shots were fired by the 12-inch guns of the *Canopus* from her stationary

position on the mudbanks of the inner harbour. The *Gneissman* had continued to approach until she saw the fatal tripods, whereupon she immediately turned round and, followed by one of her light cruisers, made off at full speed to join her main body. In a few moments the whole of the German squadron was steaming off in a westerly direction with all possible speed. At 10 o'clock, the *Kent*, *Carnarvon* and *Glasgow* having already sailed, Admiral Sturdee came out of the harbour in the *Invincible*, followed by the *Inflexible* and *Cornwall*, while the light cruisers, one of whom (the *Bristol*) had her engines actually opened up, hurried on after as fast as possible.



Invincible is here seen opening fire. It is now about 12.45 p.m. and *von Spee* is still being steadily overhauled.

The whole five ships of the German squadron were now visible, hull down on the horizon about fifteen miles away. The order was given for general chase, but later on, having the day before him, the Admiral regulated the speeds, the battle-cruisers

maintaining only about 20 knots. This, however, was quite sufficient to overhaul the Germans, who after their long sojourn in the Pacific without docking were not able to steam more than 18 knots in company. Even so, the *Leipzig* began to lag behind, and shortly before 1 o'clock, the *Invincible* opened fire upon her at 16,000 yards.

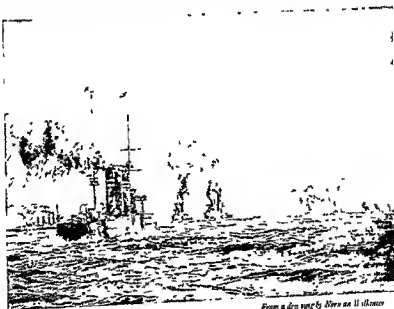
Confronted with having his ships devoured one by one, von Spee took a decision which was certainly in accordance with the best traditions of the sea. Signalling to his light cruisers to make their escape to the South American coast, he turned with the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* to face his pursuers. The action which followed was on the British side uneventful. The German Admiral endeavoured more than once to close to ranges at which his powerful secondary armament of 5.9's could play their part. The British held off just far enough to make this fire ineffective, and pounded their enemy with their 12-inch guns.

At this long range, however, it took a considerable time and much ammunition to achieve the destruction

of the German cruisers. The *Scharnhorst* with the Admiral and all hands, sank at 4.17 p.m., her last signal to her consort being to save herself. *Gneisenau* continued to fight against hopeless odds with the utmost fortitude until about 6 o'clock when, being in a completely disabled condition, she opened her sea-cocks and vanished, with her flag still flying, beneath the icy waters of the ocean. The British ships rushing to the spot and lowering every available boat were able only to save 200 Germans, many of whom died the next day from the shock of the cold water. When both the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* had sunk, the *Invincible* had only thirty and the *Immovable* only twenty-two rounds left for each of their 12-inch guns.

Total Destruction of the German Squadron—End of the German Cruiser Warfare—End of the Great Strain

Meanwhile, the other British cruisers had each selected one of the flying German light vessels, and a series of chases ensued. The *Kent* (Captain Allie) overtook and sunk the *Nürnberg* by a effort of steaming which surpassed a previous records and even, it is stated



From a drawing by Allen and Wilkerson

THE ACTION OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS 1914

An artist's impression of the action at a critical point. From left to right are the British ships *Glasgow*, *Kent*, *Invincible* and *Indefatigable* engaging the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*. Further to the right, the three smaller German ships—*Nürnberg*, *Leipzig* and *Dresden*—are seen in flight.

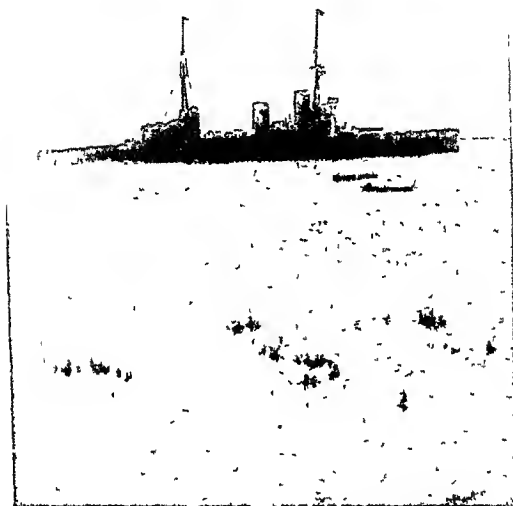


Photo taken from H M S "Inflexible"

AFTER THE ACTION PICKING UP SURVIVORS

This remarkable photograph shows H M S *Inflexible* standing by while her boats are cleared away to the rescue of survivors from the *Gneisenau*. The German sailors seen in the water many of whom were rescued suffered severely from shock and exposure

her designed speed. The *Nürnberg* refused to surrender, and as she foundered by the head, the victors could see a group of men on her uplifted stern waving to the last the German flag. The *Leipzig* was finished off by the *Glasgow* and the *Cornwall*. The *Dresden* alone for the time made good her escape. She was hunted down and destroyed three months later in the roadstead of Mas-a-Tuera.

Thus came to an end the German cruiser warfare in the outer seas. With the exception of the *Karlsruhe*, of which nothing had been heard for some time

and which we now know was sunk by an internal explosion on November 4, and the *Dresden* soon to be hunted down, no German ships of war remained on any of the oceans of the world. It had taken four months from the beginning of the war to achieve this result. Its consequences were far-reaching, and affected simultaneously our position in every part of the globe. The strain was everywhere relaxed. All our enterprises, whether of war or commerce, proceeded in every theatre without the slightest hindrance. Within twenty-four hours orders were sent to a score of British

ships to return to Home waters For the first time we saw ourselves possessed of immense surpluses of ships of certain classes, of trained men and of naval supplies of all kinds, and were in a position

to use them to the best advantage The public, though gratified by the annihilating character of the victory, was quite unconscious of its immense importance to the whole naval situation

CORONEL AND THE FALKLANDS

SHIPS DIRECTLY INVOLVED

Approximate Figure of Comparative Power	Name	Effective Speed Knots	Guns	Approximate Figure of Comparative Power	Name	Effective Speed Knots	Guns
BATTLE CRUISERS							
5	<u>Invincible</u>	24	8 12-inch				
5	<u>Inflexible</u>	24	8 12-inch				
BATTLESHIP							
4	<u>Canopus</u>	13½	4 12-inch 12 6-inch				
CRUISERS							
3	<u>Defence</u>	22	4 9 2-inch 10 7 5-inch	2½	<u>Schamhorst</u>	22	8 8 2-inch 6 5 9-inch
2	<u>Good Hope</u>	21½	2 9 2-inch 16 6-inch	2½	<u>Gneisenau</u>	22	8 8 2-inch 6 5 9-inch
1½	<u>Carnarvon</u>	21	4 7 5-inch 6 6-inch				
1	<u>Monmouth</u>	21	14 6-inch				
1	<u>Kent</u>	21½	14 6-inch				
1	<u>Cornwall</u>	21	14 6-inch				
LIGHT CRUISERS							
	<u>Glasgow</u>	24	2 6-inch 10 4-inch		<u>Leipzig</u>	21	10 4 1-inch
	<u>Bristol</u>	24	2 6-inch 10 4-inch		<u>Nürnberg</u>	22	10 4 1-inch
					<u>Dresden</u>	22	10 4 1-inch
ARMED MERCHANT CRUISERS							
	<u>Macedonia</u>	17					
	<u>Otranto</u>	16	4 4 7-inch				

NOTE.—The figures of comparative value are only intended to enable the reader to follow the account As broad classifications they are true, but they can only be taken as approximate

CHAPTER XXIX

WITH FISHER AT THE ADMIRALTY

NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER, 1914

*" that pale, that white-faced shore,
Whose foot spurns back the ocean's roaring tides,*

*That water-walled bulwark, still secure
And confident from foreign purposes "*

KING JOHN, Act II, Sc 1

German Dreadnoughts off Yarmouth—What does it Mean?—Anti-climax—Inroads upon the Grand Fleet—The Drain of Refits—Sir John Jellicoe's Protests—Admiralty and Commander-in-Chief—The Dreadnought Margin—The Third Battle Squadron to Rosyth—The Admiralty Insist on their View—The Destroyer Distribution—A Real Difficulty—A Wearing Discussion—The Actual Facts of Relative Strength—British Readiness to Accept Battle—The Attempted Seaplane Raid on Cuxhaven—The Grand Fleet Sweeps South—The Invasion Alarm—Moon and Tides—Further Intervention on the Belgian Coast—Immense Relief of the Falklands Victory—Lord Fisher's View—Correspondence between us—Lord Fisher and Admiral Sturdee—Admiral Oliver's Foresight—Growing Power of the Fleet—New Construction—Submarines—Fisher's Great Impulse—Monitors—The Great Programme—The Battle-cruisers *Repulse* and *Renown*—Full Speed Ahead

LORD FISHER had barely taken up his duties in the Admiralty when an incident occurred which seemed to indicate the ending of the period of German inactivity in the North Sea which had succeeded the action of August 28 in the Heligoland Fight

German Dreadnoughts off Yarmouth

Early in the morning of November 3, the unusual signal was made to the Admiralty that several German battle-cruisers or battleships had been sighted off Gorleston on the Norfolk coast by the mine-sweeping gunboat *Halcyon*, and that she was engaged with them. Almost immediately afterwards heavy shells were reported to be bursting in the water and on the beach near Yarmouth. The First Sea Lord and I reached the War Room from our bedrooms in a few minutes. The question was, What did it mean?

What Does It Mean?

It seemed quite certain that German battle-cruisers would not be sent to throw shells at an open town like Yarmouth. Obviously this was a demonstration to divert the British Fleet from something else which was going

to happen—was already perhaps happening. Was it a German raid into the Channel, or a serious attempt by the German Navy to intervene upon the Belgian coast while the land battle was still raging? Was it a descent on the British coast at Sunderland or Blyth? We had no means of judging. The last thing it seemed possible to believe was that first-class units of the German Fleet would have been sent across the North Sea simply in order to disturb the fisher-folk of Yarmouth. By other signals our destroyers, *Leopard* and *Lively*, who were patrolling in the neighbourhood of Yarmouth, also reported that they were engaged, and added that they were proceeding to attack the enemy.

Where were our main forces? The Commander-in-Chief was for the first time in the war at the Admiralty, whither he had been summoned to confer with the new First Sea Lord. The Grand Fleet was at Lough Swilly in the north of Ireland. The 3rd Battle Squadron was steaming through the Irish Channel. No part of the Grand Fleet was nearer than Beatty and his battle-cruisers and these were as far off as Cromarty. Whatever happened, we could not fight a general action

with our main Fleet till late on the following day. Meanwhile the Harwich Striking Force, the Dover flotillas, Admiral Hood's forces off the Belgian coast, and Admiral Burney's Channel Fleet, must do the best they could. If the German demonstration off Yarmouth was the prelude or concomitant to a serious attempt to break into the Channel, the very greatest naval events would follow. The contingency, as the reader is aware, had always been faced, and we were well aware that we should have to wait for our revenge till the next day. Meanwhile there was nothing to be done but to put all the fleets and flotillas on guard and in motion with the double object of resisting to the utmost a German attack to the southward and intercepting as speedily as possible from the north the return of the enemy.

Several hours of tension passed, and then gradually it became clear that the German battle-cruisers were returning home at full speed, and that nothing else was apparently happening, and the incredible conclusion forced itself upon us that the German Admiralty had had no other purpose in hand than this silly demonstration off Yarmouth beach.

Anti-climax—Inroads upon the Grand Fleet

This anti-climax was fatiguing. The experience of bracing ourselves to the most tremendous events, and then finding nothing happen, was one which we were compelled more than once to undergo at the Admiralty.

* * *

The new First Sea Lord was even more sure of the superiority of the British line of battle over the enemy than I was, and in this his views contrasted very sharply with those of the Commander-in-Chief. In full agreement with Sir Arthur Wilson, he proposed on his assumption of office to bring the Third Battle Squadron (the King Edwards) down to Portland to increase our security against a German incursion into the Channel, and he moved the Fifth Battle Squadron (the Formidables) with the two Lord Nelsons to Sheerness

to provide battleship support for the Harwich Striking Force, and to give an additional security against raid or invasion. These movements were no sooner determined than news of the Battle of Coronel was received (November 4), and we were forced to make far more serious inroads upon Sir John Jellicoe's command. The battle-cruisers *Inflexible* and *Invincible* were sent as described to the Falklands, and Lord Fisher, as we have seen, demanded the *Princess Royal* for the Atlantic.

This last order produced continuous protests from Sir John Jellicoe, and led to an interchange of telegrams and letters in which the Commander-in-Chief dwelt upon every aspect of his dangers and weakness and the Admiralty, whilst insisting on their decision, endeavoured to reassure and placate him.

Our Dreadnought margin in home waters at the outbreak of war had been just sufficient. Every ship was ready and in good order. We did not feel that we could spare one. But after the first two months we were compelled to send ships one at a time from each Battle Squadron down to their home ports on the South Coast to refit. A regular system of refits, as was foreseen, had to be instituted. This involved the permanent absence of two or three of the most important vessels from the Grand Fleet. The enemy, on the other hand, lying in his main base, could always in theory be credited with having all his ships available at his selected moment for battle. Before, however, the drain of refits came upon us we had succeeded in reinforcing the Fleet by five fine ships, so that we began the war at our maximum possible strength and always, except for the briefest intervals, held or improved on that number.

The Drain of Refits—Sir John Jellicoe's Protests

The requirements of the Commander-in-Chief were, however, hard to meet. The strategy on which we were all agreed involved keeping the Grand Fleet in distant northern waters and required very large forces of destroyers and other light craft for its local security and for its service in battle. On the



From a drawing by S. Begg

MR CHURCHILL AND LORD FISHER AT THE ADMIRALTY

An artist's impression of the First Lord's room at the Admiralty as it was in 1914. Mr Churchill is shown seated at his desk engaged in consultation with the First Sea Lord, Admiral of the Fleet Lord Fisher

other hand, while no properly defended war harbour had yet been created capable of holding the entire fleet, various other bases had to be effectively guarded and patrolled, for which separate flotillas must be supplied. If at any time from any cause, two or three ships were absent from the Grand Fleet for a week or two, the Commander-in-Chief drew severe comparisons between the German Fleet and his own. He was a master of this kind of argument. From his own side he deducted any ship which had any defect, however temporary, however small—even defects which would not have prevented her from taking her place in the line in an emergency. He sometimes also deducted two or three of the most powerful battleships in the world which had newly joined his command because they were not trained up to the full level of efficiency of the others, and these were absolutely blotted out as if they were of no value whatever.¹ He next proceeded to deal with the enemy. He always credited them with several ships more than we now know they had, or were then thought likely to have. In

October 1914, he gave credence to a suggestion that the four German Dreadnoughts of the *König* class had been completely re-armed with 14-inch guns. In 1915 the size of these guns had advanced to 15-inch. I was on both occasions compelled to set up expert committees to demolish these baseless suppositions. Unable to deny that the British line of battle could fire a broadside double in weight to that of the Germans, he developed a skilful argument to prove that this advantage was more than counteracted by other disadvantages arising from the superior displacement of contemporary German ships. He dwelt on this even at a period when his fleet had been reinforced by seven or eight additional units of enormous power without any corresponding accession to the enemy's strength.

One must admit, nevertheless, that the withdrawal of the *Princess Royal* inflicted a very serious injury upon the Battle Cruiser Squadron, and that Sir David Beatty might have had to fight an action without any margin of superiority during her absence. In this matter, however, Lord Fisher entered the lists in person.

¹ *The Grand Fleet* by Sir John Jellicoe, p. 31

Admiralty and Commander-in-Chief

First Sea Lord to Commander-in-Chief

Personal

November 12, 1914

I want to make it clear to you what the *Scharnhorst* Squadron means as regards our dispositions

1 We have not heard of them since November 4

2 They may adopt the following courses —

(a) Go through Panama Canal, smash our West Indian Fleet and release all the armed German liners from New York—hence the *Princess Royal*

(b) Go to south-east coast of America and stop our vital food supplies—hence the two *Invincibles*

(c) Go to the Cape and raid the Army base at Walfish Bay—hence the *Minotaur* to reinforce *Albion*

(d) Go to Duala and relieve the Germans, destroying our ships and military expedition—hence the *Warrior*, *Black Prince* and three *Edgar Quind*

I hope to send Bartolome to you to-morrow with information which is too secret to be written or telegraphed

The secret information pointed to the possibility of the Germans endeavouring to slip one or two of their battle-cruisers into the Atlantic to help the return to Germany of the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* and incidentally to release all their fast liners in New York. Lord Fisher became vehemently impressed with this idea, and certainly the period was one of extreme strategic tension when some enterprise by the enemy seemed especially to be expected

The Dreadnought Margin

Admiralty to Commander-in-Chief

November 13, 1914

Since war began you have gained two Dreadnoughts on balance, and will have by 20th twenty-seven superior units to twenty. We intend *Princess Royal* to rejoin you as soon as *Scharnhorst* is dealt with

During the next month you should suspend sending ships away for refit,

doing the best you can at Scapa. If notwithstanding the above you feel the need of reinforcements we should propose to meet you by stationing the eight *King Edwards* at Rosyth, where they would be well placed to join you for general action or to attack an invading force

This would avoid necessity of stationing cruisers there for the present

If you agree the eight *King Edwards* will be ordered to sail to-night

The Commander-in-Chief in reply asserted that the twenty-seven units quoted included three ships, two of which had never fired a gun and the third was only partially trained. He deprecated the Third Battle Squadron being stationed at Rosyth, as without being covered by cruisers or sea-going destroyers, it would run a great risk from mines and submarines outside the limits of the port defence. He suggested that it was preferable to keep them at Cromarty closely adjacent to the main base where they would be covered by the cruisers of the Grand Fleet and by the Destroyer Flotilla stationed at Cromarty

The Admiralty, however, insisted on the Third Battle Squadron being stationed at Rosyth

Admiralty to Commander-in-Chief

November 16, 1914

The importance of preventing the enemy from making a serious attack on our coast and getting away without being engaged makes it imperative to have a force nearer the probable points of attack than either Scapa Flow or Cromarty, which are practically the same distance off. The coast has been so denuded of destroyers for the sake of strengthening the force with you (amounting now to seventy-one destroyers) that there is only a skeleton force of patrol vessels available on the East Coast, amounting to three Scouts, twenty-three Destroyers, twelve Torpedo Boats, between the Naze and St Abbs Head, a distance of 300 miles. In these circumstances we are reluctantly compelled to decide on the *King Edwards* and the Third Cruiser Squadron going to Rosyth, and you should detach half a

flotilla of the seventy-one destroyers at Scapa Flow to act with them. We are sending you a carefully compiled table of comparative strength of your Fleet and the German High Sea Fleet, which makes it clear that without the Third Battle Squadron you have such a preponderance of gun power that with equal gunnery efficiency a successful result is ensured.

The Admiralty have in mind the importance of getting back the *Princess Royal* as soon as the situation admits. Your proposals as to mining have been carefully considered, but the work done by our submarines in the Bight has been of such importance that it is undesirable to add to their dangers by laying mines whose positions must be very uncertain. The Germans have no difficulty in sweeping any channel they wish when they want to bring any of their ships out, and do so daily. It would be very difficult for us to lay fresh lines in any channels they sweep on account of the dangers to the minelayers from our own mines.

The Third Battle Squadron to Rosyth— The Admiralty Insist on their View

This and preceding telegrams expressed the deliberate views of the First Sea Lord and Sir Arthur Wilson, and I was in the fullest agreement with them.¹

The Commander-in-Chief, however, urged that the 71 destroyers mentioned by the Admiralty included 10 which were absent refitting, and pointed out with justice that the 40 destroyers of the Harwich flotillas had been omitted from those at the disposition of the Admiralty. He asked particularly for reconsideration of the order to detach half a flotilla with the Third Battle Squadron. Without these additional 12 destroyers he stated that the safety of the Dreadnought Battle Fleet was seriously endangered, a submarine attack on Scapa Flow was quite feasible, and "as I am directed to use this base, I trust I shall not be held responsible for any disaster that may occur." He concluded by pointing out that the relative strength of the High Sea Fleet and the Grand Fleet could not be decided without reference

¹ See Appendix

to the cruiser and destroyer strength of the two fleets. His comparative weakness in these essentials counterbalanced, he declared, any battleship superiority he possessed and made him anxious to be concentrated.

Admiralty to Commander-in-Chief

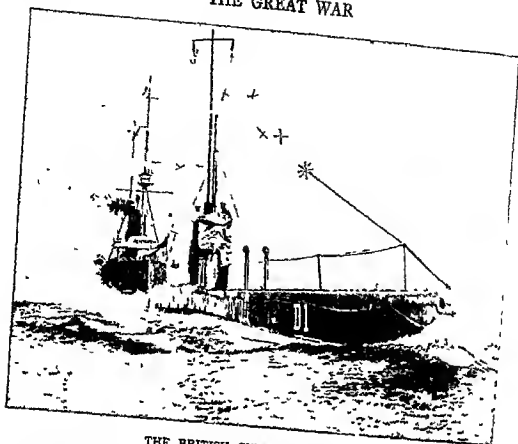
November 17, 1914

We have carefully reviewed the position and given fullest consideration to your wishes. We are confident that your fleet with its cruisers and flotillas is strong enough for the definite task entrusted to it. In view of the grave needs we have to meet elsewhere we cannot reinforce you at present, nor alter our dispositions.

The 3rd Battle Squadron, 3rd Cruiser Squadron and eight destroyers should proceed to Rosyth as ordered. You have, of course, full discretion to move your Fleet in any way necessary to provide for its safety and enable you to meet the enemy, and are not tied to Scapa. Every effort is being made to accelerate the completion of the submarine defences.

The Destroyer Distribution— A Real Difficulty

The destroyer question was one of real difficulty. Although we had more than double the seagoing strength of the German flotillas, we had so much to guard, that we could not provide a superior force kept always intact in the band of the Commander-in-Chief for a great Fleet action. "I know perfectly well," wrote Sir John Jellicoe on December 4 to Lord Fisher, "that the First and Third Flotillas [from Harwich] will not join me in time." The Germans, he declared, would have eight flotillas comprising 88 torpedo boat destroyers, all of which would certainly be ready at the selected moment. "They have five torpedoes each, total 440 torpedoes—unless I can strike at them first." He himself might, he claimed, fall as low as 32 or even 28 destroyers. "You know," he added, "the difficulty and objections to turning away from the enemy in a Fleet action, but with such a menace I am bound to do it, unless my own torpedo boat destroyers can stop or neutralize the movement." There was



THE BRITISH SUBMARINE "D1"

Photo Coll

The submarine as it was in the years immediately preceding the war was not of course the equal either in size or range, of the giant under-water craft of to day. The D class dated from 1903 and were of 340 to 600 tons with three torpedo tubes and a range of 4 000 miles. On this class for the first time a gun was mounted and the 'D' boats were the first submarines to be fitted with wireless.

no doubt that all the Commander-in-Chief's thoughts fitted together into one consistent whole and was the result of profound study and reflection. Lord Fisher, however, remained obdurate. "I think we have to stand fast," he wrote to me, enclosing Sir John Jellicoe's letter. "The Tyrwhitt mob and our over-sea submarines are our sole aggressive force in the South." He proposed, however, to put one of the Harwich flotillas in the Humber. "We wait your return before action!"—Humber and Harwich each 290 miles from Heligoland—but the complete flotilla at the Humber is very much nearer Jellicoe, and so a salve to him in reply to enclosed. As A. K. Wilson observed a moment ago, both he and I would probably have written exactly the same letter as Jellicoe, trying to get all we could! Yours till death, F."

¹ I was in France for thirty-six hours—
W S C

A Wearing Discussion—The Actual Facts of Relative Strength

This was a wearing discussion, and no one can blame the Commander-in-Chief for expressing his anxieties and endeavouring to keep his command up to the highest strength. I always tried to sustain him in every possible way. His powerful orderly brain, his exact and comprehensive knowledge, enabled him to develop and perfect in this first year of the war the mighty organization of the Grand Fleet. He bore with constancy the many troubles and perplexities of the early months. His fine sailor-like qualities made him always ready night or day to take his whole gigantic Fleet to sea, and he was never so happy as when he was at sea. Even when I did not share his outlook, I sympathized with his trials.

The opinions of Lord Fisher at this period upon the margin of strength required for the Grand Fleet were,

as will be seen, in sharp contrast with those he expressed at a later period during the operations at the Dardanelles. Personally, I always considered our line of battle amply superior, nor did I believe the Germans would be able to bring out at a given moment all the 88 torpedo boats with which Sir John Jellicoe always credited them.

We now know the actual forces which the enemy assembled on December 16 of

this same year, on the occasion when the whole High Sea Fleet made almost the most ambitious sortie into the North Sea which its history records. There were 13 Dreadnought battleships and 4 battle-cruisers, total 17 Dreadnoughts instead of the 20 which were completed and which the Admiralty counted as available, and 53 torpedo boats in place of the Commander-in-Chief's 88. Against this Sir John Jellicoe had (until refits were re-opened at the end of November) 27 superior units (subject to what he says about them), and as many of the 71 destroyers as were fit for sea on any given day. The Germans also took to sea on December 16 a squadron of 8 pre-Dreadnoughts, and against this our Third Battle Squadron, which had been rightly restored to the Grand Fleet, was a proper and superior provision. This balance of strength represents the period of our greatest strain in Home waters and all over the world.

British Readiness to Accept Battle—The Attempted Seaplane Raid on Cuxhaven—The Grand Fleet Sweeps South

At this, as at all other times, the Admiralty would have welcomed a general battle. An attack by seaplanes launched from carrying ships upon the Zeppelin sheds near Cuxhaven, was planned by us for November 22. On the 20th we telegraphed to Sir John Jellicoe —



Photo. Cribb

THE PLANES OF THE SUBMARINE

When a submarine is about to submerge buoyancy is reduced by the admission of water into her ballast and trimming tanks. A submerged submarine comes to the surface by application of the reverse process the expulsion of the water from the tanks. The boats shown here belong to Class 'C' of which thirty seven had been built by 1908. The fin-like structures shown in the pictures are planes, by means of which the angle of descent or ascent is regulated.

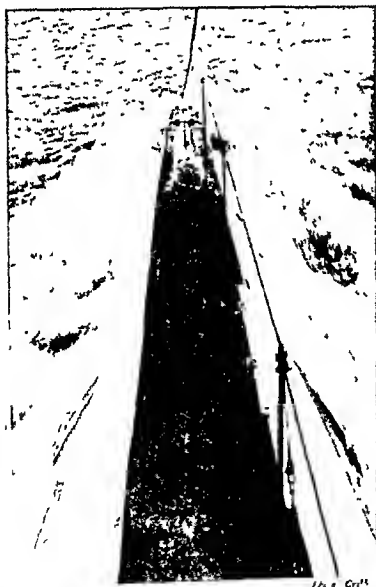
"Our reliable German information and also our telegram No 338 to you shows, firstly, concentration of German cruisers, battle-cruisers and battleships in Weser and Elbe, and secondly, disposal of their submarines to hunt in the Sbetlands and English Channel. In these favourable circumstances the acrial attack on Cuxhaven Zeppelin sheds, which we had previously planned and considered desirable in itself, might easily bring on a considerable action in which your battle-cruisers and the Grand Fleet might take part without undue risk from German submarines.

"We suggest for your consideration Tyrwhitt and aeroplanes attacking on Monday at daybreak, with you supporting him from the northward with whatever force is necessary, if the enemy respond to the challenge. Further, if it should prove, as some reliable information indicates, that the enemy is preparing an offensive raid or sortie himself, our movement would bring on a collision at the outset unexpected and disconcerting to him."

The Commander-in-Chief, after some discussion, preferred Tuesday daybreak for the attack, as the longer notice would enable him to finish certain repairing work. The Admiralty plans were altered accordingly. We telegraphed on the 21st —

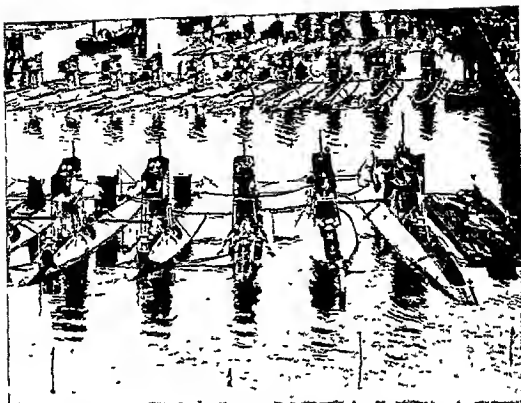
"We consider the present a good occasion for a sweep southward by the Grand Fleet. The seaplane attack is incidental and subsidiary, though very desirable in itself. It may bring on an action now that the German Fleet is concentrated near Wilhelmshaven, and their cruisers and battle-cruisers are active. It will frustrate any offensive movement they may intend, as reported. Tuesday, 24th, at 5.30 a.m., will be the time."

No result was, however, achieved. Sir John Jellicoe brought the Battle Fleet down into the centre of the North Sea about 180 miles from Heligoland, with the battle-cruisers about 40 miles nearer. But in the weather prevailing the ships could hardly get off the water, and the Germans remained unaware of our movements and



PUTTING HER NOSE INTO IT

The modern submarine is of sufficient size and power to be viewed almost in the light of a submersible destroyer. It can travel on the surface at very considerable speed. Even in war years the Class 'E' boats were capable of a range of 3,000 nautical miles at 10 knots with a maximum speed of 15 knots.



BRITISH UNDER-WATER CRAFT IN 1914

Photo Gribb

This photograph taken in 1914 shows only a small proportion of the country's strength in submarines. In July 1914, more than a hundred of this type of craft, built or completing, were available for service as compared with Germany's thirty-nine, many of which were small boats

without any plans of their own. The episode shows, however, the underlying confidence of the Admiralty and of the Commander-in-Chief in the strength of the Grand Fleet even during this time of strain.

The Invasion Alarm

To add to the distractions of this hard month of November, 1914, an invasion scare took a firm hold of the military and naval authorities. It was argued by the War Office that the lull on the fighting fronts would enable the Germans to spare large numbers of good troops—250,000 if necessary—for the invasion of Great Britain. Lord Kitchener directed all defensive preparations to be made, and Lord Fisher threw himself into the task with gusto. Although, as the reader is aware, I was sceptical on this subject, I felt that the precautions were justifiable, and would at any rate add interest to the life of our coast and Home defence forces. I therefore allowed myself to succumb to the suppressed excitement which grew throughout the highest

circles, and did my utmost to aid and speed our preparations.

We stationed as described the 3rd Battle Squadron at the Forth, brought the 2nd Fleet to the Thames, disposed the old *Majestic* battleships in the various harbours along the East Coast, arranged blockships to be sunk, and laid mines to be exploded at the proper time in the mouths of our undefended harbours, while the whole coastal watch, military, aerial and marine, throbbed with activity. The army arrangements were complicated by the fact that some of the divisions which were sufficiently trained to be used to repel the invaders, had lent their rifles to those that were undergoing training, and these rifles had to be collected and redistributed as a part of the procedure prescribed for the supreme emergency. To such expedients were we reduced! However, the Germans remained absolutely quiescent, the tides and moon, which for some days before November 20 were exceptionally favourable to nocturnal landings, ceased to present these conditions, and the

sense of some great impending event gradually faded from our minds

Moon and Tides—Further Intervention on the Belgian Coast—Immense Relief of the Falklands Victory

Lord Fisher to Mr Churchill

7 a m, November 21, 1914

An angel's sleep! In Heaven from 9 till now!

It was kind of you not to wake me with Grey's credible witness!

Let us entreat and urge Kitchener to send a hundred thousand men AT ONCE to Flanders, and warn Joffre not to be "two divisions too few and two days too late!" Kitchener's balance of 160,000 men will amply suffice and the "Ides of March" have passed! The waning moon and dawning tide [dawn high-tide] will not recur till days following December 10. *Do write to him accordingly, or shall I?*

It has been a splendid "dress rehearsal," tell him, and very reassuring—his mass of men and his mobile guns! We must press him to send 100,000 men to Flanders

On November 20 General Joffre asked for further naval co-operation on the Belgian coast

"General Foch," he stated, "reports that for some little time the French or English ships have no longer been participating in the action of our forces in the neighbourhood of Nieuport. On account of very violent bombardment by the enemy in this region, it would be advantageous if the ships could attack the numerous German batteries established to the east of the mouth of the Yser. I should be glad if you would notify the Ministry of Marine, and the Admiralty, of this situation, in order to obtain a more active co-operation on the part of the squadron between Nieuport and Ostend."

We were able to send the old battleship *Revenge*, whose guns had been specially re-mounted for long-range fire, and several smaller vessels under Admiral Hood, and the naval bombardment of the German right was effectively resumed. "The conditions on the coast," Hood, however, reported on the 22nd, "are quite different from what they were

during the first few days. To-day there was a heavy fire from guns I could not locate or damage. No troops are ever visible. The inundation has stopped their movement."

To the situation of strain and effort which gripped us during November came the welcome relief of the victory at the Falklands. Lord Fisher received it with a moderated satisfaction.

Lord Fisher's View—Correspondence between us

"We cannot," he wrote to me on December 10, "but be overjoyed at the *Monmouth* and *Good Hope* being avenged! But let us be self-restrained—not too exultant!—till we know details! Perhaps their guns never reached us! (We had so few casualties!) We know THEIR gunnery was excellent! Their THIRD salvo murdered Cradock! So it may have been like shooting pheasants the pheasants not shooting back! Not too much glory for us, only great satisfaction! Not a battle for a Poet Laureate! Let us wait and hear before we crow! Then again, it may be a wonder why the cruisers escaped—if they have escaped—I hope not, for we had such a preponderating force—such numbers! (How the *Glasgow* must have enjoyed it!) Anyhow, don't let us encourage ourselves in too many joy messages till we know more."

But I made haste to ascribe to him all the credit that was his due

December 10

This was your show and your luck

I should only have sent one Greyhound¹ and *Defence*. This would have done the trick

But it was a niggling coup. Your *flair* was quite true. Let us have some more victories together, and confound all our foes abroad—and (don't forget) at home

This delighted the Admiral, and in his reply (December 11) he threw a friendly light upon other fields of activity than those with which this chapter has been concerned

"Your letter pleasant! There is another quite lovely scheme! I am to be praised so as to get 'swelled head' and

¹ Battle-cruiser

think myself ignored by you, and to be in your shoes! It is all too sweet for words! It is palpably transparent! I was told of this yesterday! It really is curious why they so bate you! I think I told you what G—— said, that though he abhorred me, yet I have splendid friends in the Tory camp!"

Lord Fisher and Admiral Sturdee—
Admiral Oliver's Foresight

A cause of difference, however, soon arose between us. The First Sea Lord was displeased with Sir Doveton Sturdee for not having succeeded in destroying the German light cruiser *Dresden* with the rest, and he searchingly criticized that Admiral's dispositions after the action. He wished to leave Admiral Sturdee in South American waters till the *Dresden* was hunted down. As it was imperative that the *Invincible* and *Inflexible* should come home at once, such a decision would have entailed transferring Admiral Sturdee's flag to the *Carnarvon*, and leaving him with a command scarcely suited to his rank and standing, and woefully out of harmony with his recent achievement. I was obliged to veto this proposal, and Lord Fisher was for some time much vexed at my decision.

The First Sea Lord also made the disquieting suggestion that the Germans might slip a battle-cruiser like the *Derfflinger* through our blockade in the long winter nights and fall upon the returning *Invincible* and *Inflexible*, who had fired away three-quarters of their ammunition. I was greatly disturbed at this, and hastened to the Chief of the Staff. But Admiral Oliver was not often found improvident. He had already several weeks before sent the battleship *Vengeance* with a quarter outfit for both vessels to St Vincent, where it awaited them.

* * * *

In spite of their anxieties, November and December were months of rapidly growing power to the Navy. The variety and scope of Admiralty business extended continually, and the number of important directions to be given increased every week. The reader who is further interested should study in the Appendix

the selection of First Lord's Minutes which I have thought it worth while to print. From these original documents, conceived under the pressure of events, a truer idea can be formed of what was passing than from much description.

In no part of our work did Lord Fisher and I act together in greater harmony than in the realm of new construction.

Growing Power of the Fleet—
New Construction

The first task of the Admiralty in naval construction on the outbreak of war was to accelerate the completion of all the warships which were building in Great Britain, and according to the schemes we had had prepared before the war, extreme priority was to be assigned to vessels which could be finished within six months. On this basis we proceeded during the first three months. When it became clear that the war would not be ended one way or the other by the first main decisions on land, and that the sea battle was indefinitely deferred, I extended this original period, and we adopted the principle, "Everything that can be finished in 1915, and nothing that can't."

This brought very large numbers of vessels into the accelerated class and, of course, opened the way for a considerable new construction of submarines, destroyers and even light cruisers. There had already been ordered when Lord Fisher arrived at the Admiralty a score of new destroyers and submarines, in addition to all the pre-war vessels under accelerated construction.

The yards were therefore full of work, and care was needed not to impede current construction by new orders. Lord Fisher, however, brought a very great surge of impulse to this sphere of our activities. It was a moment when megalomania was a virtue. Some progress had already been made on two of the British battleships of the programme of 1914-15. The First Sea Lord at once demanded to make them into battle-cruisers, sacrificing two more guns in each in order to get the immense speed for which he thirsted. I agreed to this, although it involved some delay, and

the *Repulse* and the *Renown* were redesigned accordingly

Submarines

The construction of submarines was more urgent. I was not alarmed about the immediate position, although all sorts of rumours were afoot.

Naval Intelligence Division

November 7, 1914

With reference to your report of yesterday, apparently attaching credence to a statement that from 100 to 200 small submarines have been manufactured secretly in Germany, have you considered how many trained officers and personnel this important flotilla would require? What evidence is there at your disposal to show that the Germans have trained this number of submarine captains and officers? I have always understood that their flotilla of submarines before the war did not exceed 27. There is no personnel that requires more careful training than the submarine personnel. All the experience of our officers shows that a submarine depends for its effectiveness mainly upon its captain. The function of the Intelligence Division is not merely to collect and pass on the Munchausen tales of spies and untrustworthy agents, but carefully to sift and scrutinize the intelligence they receive, and in putting it forward to indicate the degree of probability which attaches to it. It appears to me impossible that any large addition to the German submarine force can be made for many months to come. Even if the difficulties of material were overcome those of personnel would impose an absolute limit. It is very likely that a few small portable submarines have been prepared for coast work.

W S C

But the future already contained its menaces. I greeted Fisher on his arrival with the following minutes, the first two of which were addressed to his predecessor —

Secretary
Third Sea Lord

October 13, 1914

Please state exactly what is the total submarine programme now sanctioned

by the Cabinet or under construction in the various yards. What measures can be adopted for increasing the number of submarines? Is it possible to let further contracts for submarines on a fifteen months' basis? It is indispensable that the whole possible plant for submarine construction should be kept at the fullest pressure night and day.

W S C

Secretary
First Sea Lord
Naval Secretary

October 28, 1914

Please propose without delay the largest possible programme of submarine boats to be delivered in from 12 to 24 months from the present time. You should assume for this purpose that you have control of all sources of manufacture required for submarines, that there is no objection to using Vickers' drawings, and that steam engines may be used to supplement oil engines. You should exert every effort of ingenuity and organization to secure the utmost possible delivery. As soon as your proposals are ready, which should be in the next few days, they can be considered at a conference of the Sea Lords. The Cabinet must be satisfied that the absolute maximum output is being worked to in submarines. We may be sure that Germany is doing this. Third Sea Lord's department must therefore act with the utmost vigour, and not be deterred by the kind of difficulties which hamper action in time of peace.

W S C

Fisher's Great Impulse
Secretary
First Sea Lord
Third Sea Lord

October 30, 1914

More important than the deliveries of battleships is the acceleration of light cruisers and submarines. With regard to light cruisers, it ought not to take more than one year to construct *Castor*, *Inconstant*, *Cambria* and *Canterbury*. What is the present position of these ships? Have they been begun yet? Proposals should be made which secure their delivery before the end of 1915.

2 Proposals should also be made to accelerate *Royalist*, *Cleopatra*, *Champion*,



Photo Crill

GUN LAYERS OF THE ROYAL NAVY AT DOTTER' DRILL

The art of handling laying and firing guns on a battleship is one that demands a very high degree of skill and a rigorous training. Here gun-layers are seen at practice with a cardboard target upon which by a clever device, hits are registered. Known as "dotter" drill, this method of training enables the gun layers to maintain their efficiency without the necessity for floating targets and the expenditure of charges and shells.

THE GREAT WAR

and *Carysfort*, *Conquest*, and *Calliope*, so as to obtain deliveries in February. This will only be possible by working night and day in three 8-hour shifts on all these vessels, arranging with other firms not concerned in their construction to lend the necessary men.

3 All the "M" Class destroyers to be delivered in August, 1915, should be pushed forward into April and May. There is surely no reason why this cannot be done. Firms who will undertake to complete their vessels by this date would be immediately given another order for a repeat ship, so that there would be no fear of dislocation of their business. Let me have proposals on this.

4 Submarines F2, F3, G6, G8, G15, G9, G7, G10 to G13, and G1 to G5, all ought to be delivered before the end of 1915. There is an extraordinary gap after G4, when for 6 months we do not receive a single new submarine, and in 12 months we only receive 2. This is shocking, and must be bridged at all costs.

Pray let me have further proposals after such conferences as may be necessary with the firms concerned.

W S C

Lord Fisher hurled himself into this business with explosive energy. He summoned around him all the naval constructors and shipbuilding firms in Britain, and in four or five glorious days, every minute of which was pure delight to him, he presented me with schemes for a far greater construction of submarines, destroyers and small craft than I or any of my advisers had ever deemed possible. Mr Schwab was at that time passing through England on his return to the United States. We invited him to the Admiralty, and he undertook to build twenty-four submarines—twelve in Canada and twelve in the United States—the bulk of which were to be completed in the hitherto incredibly short period of six months. I arranged a system of heavy bonuses for early delivery. These large negotiations were completed and the subsequent work was



Photo Copyright

IN THE SHELL ROOM OF A BATTLESHIP

The weight of modern projectiles for the bigger guns is so great that there could be no question of handling them by any but mechanical means. The man at the lever in the above photograph is operating an overhead travelling gear from which is suspended the claw seen immediately to the right. This claw picks up the shell and carries it to a travelling tray, from which it is transferred into the hoist to be raised to the gun turret.

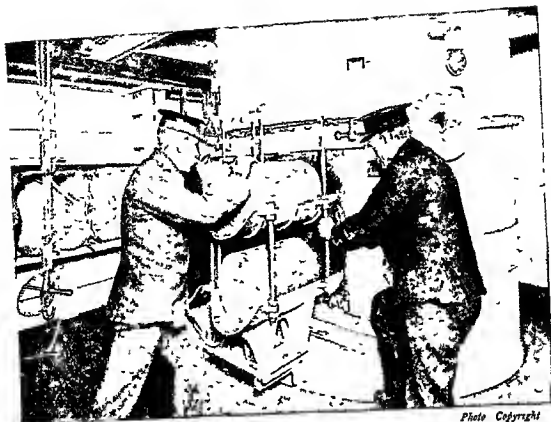


Photo Copyright

IN THE MAGAZINE

Here men are seen loading gun charges on the hoist. The charges are shown on the shelf on the left of the picture, and are sent up to the gun in two half charges.

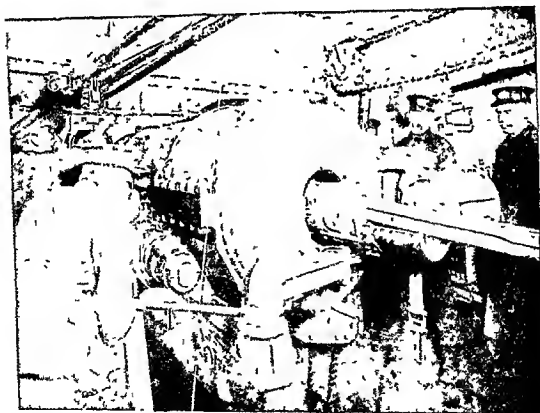


Photo Copyright

THE SHELL REACHES THE GUN

In the turret are further mechanical devices. The shell is brought into line with the breech of the gun and a rammer then comes into play pushing the projectile into position. When the shell has been driven home the powder charges are handled in a similar manner.

carried out with wonderful thoroughness and punctuality by the immense organization of the Bethlehem Steel Company

Monitors

One evening, as Lord Fisher, Mr Schwab and I sat round the octagonal table in the Admiralty, after a long discussion on the submarine contracts, we asked Mr Schwab, "Have you got anything else that will be of use to us?" He thereupon told us that he had four turrets carrying two 14-inch guns each which had almost been completed for the Greek battleship *Salamis* then building in Germany for Greece. We set our hearts on these, and I had an idea. The reader will remember the three small monitors building for Brazil, which, although no one could see any use for them at the time, I had decided to take over at the outbreak of war. The operations on the Belgian coast had shown their value. I suggested to Lord Fisher that we should buy these 14-inch turrets and build monitors to carry them. The Admiral was delighted with the plan, and in a few hours he was closeted with his constructors designing the vessels. In all our correspondence we referred to them as the *Styx* class.

Secretary

First Sea Lord

December 11, 1914

We ought without delay to order more "*Styx*" class for heavy in-shore work. There are, for instance, the four reserve 13.5-inch guns of the *Audacious*, which should certainly be mounted in new monitors. It should also be possible to draw from the reserve of 15-inch guns, and to make in a short time 15-inch or 18-inch howitzers. We require now to make ships which can be built in 6 or 7 months at the outside, and which can certainly go close in shore and attack the German Fleet in its harbours. These are special vessels built for a definite war operation, and we must look to them in default of a general action for giving us the power of forcing a naval decision at the latest in the autumn of 1915.

Our thought is proceeding independently on the same lines. I propose, as a basis of discussion, that in addition to the 4 Schwab monitors, we prepare 8

more at a cost of not more than £700,000 apiece. These vessels should be armed either with 13.5-inch or 15-inch guns, two or four in each as convenient. Or, alternatively, they should be armed with four 18-inch howitzers in separate cupolas sunk low on their heavily-armoured turtle backs. They should draw 8 feet at most, and be propelled entirely by internal combustion at a speed not exceeding 10 knots, no funnels, three or four alternative telescopic masts for fire observation, strong crinolines 20 feet away all round to make them immune from mine or torpedo, etc.

W S C

We soon embarked on an extensive scheme of monitor building.

Besides making four monitors to carry the American 14-inch gun turrets, we took two spare 15-inch gun turrets which had been prepared for two of the furthest-off new battleships (now converted into battle-cruisers), and eight 12-inch gun turrets out of four "*Majestics*," which we laid up, and with these and the American guns we armed no less than fourteen monitors, namely, two with two 15-inch guns, four with two 14-inch guns, and eight with two 12-inch guns apiece. Lord Fisher then went on and pulled the 9.2-inch guns out of the old "*Edgars*" and mounted them in fourteen small monitors, drawing 6 feet 6 inches of water, and ten 6-inch guns¹ were mounted in still smaller monitors drawing 5 feet 11 inches. We also built later on twelve large river gunboats capable of being transported by rail for service on the Danube, if we ever got there, and twelve small river gunboats or baby monitors, for service on the Tigris and the Euphrates. The bulk of the large monitors were constructed in Belfast with extraordinary celerity by Harland & Wolff and their sturdy ardent men. We also prepared 240 lighters with steel shields and internal combustion engines for landing troops under fire.

The Great Programme—The Battle-cruisers *Repulse* and *Renown*

Thus in the autumn of 1914, under

¹ Two had had to be removed from each of the five "*Queen Elizabeths*," owing to spray interference. total—20

various programmes culminating in the great Fisher impetus, we set on foot the following enormous Fleet, all due to complete by the end of 1915 —

Battleships and Battle cruisers of the greatest power	7
Light cruisers	12
Destroyers of the largest class and leaders	65
Oversea submarines	40
Coastal submarines	22
Monitors—	
Heavy	18
Medium	14
Light	5
Sloops and smaller anti submarine vessels	107
Motor launches	60
Ex-lighters with internal combustion engines	240

This tremendous new Navy, for it was nothing less, was a providential aid to the Admiralty when more than two years later the real German submarine attack began. Its creation on such a scale is one of the greatest services which the nation has owed to the genius and energy of Lord Fisher. Probably Fisher in all his long life never had a more joyous experience than this great effort of new construction. No man knew better than he how to put war thought into a ship. Shipbuilding had been the greatest passion of his life. Here were all the yards of Britain at his disposal and every Treasury barrier broken down.

Of the battle-cruisers *Republie* and *Renown*, and still more of the light battle-cruisers *Courageous*, *Furious* and *Glorious*, to which I consented four months later in circumstances which will be narrated in their place, it must be said that they were an old man's children. Although possessing many marvellous qualities never hitherto combined in a ship of war, they were light in the bone, and the Navy always considered them wanting in the structural strength and armour which the new conditions of

war more than ever required. None the less, their parent loved them dearly and always rallied with the utmost vehemence when any slur was cast upon their qualities.

Full Speed Ahead

I presided over all this process in November and December with the greatest admiration for the First Sea Lord, but with some misgivings on the score of expense. I was not yet satisfied that the war would be prolonged beyond 1915, and I did not wish to draw away from the armies men or material which might be needed in their service. Not until April, 1915, when the failure of Russia as a decisive factor became final, did I authorize a further extension of view to December 31, 1916, and agree to plans for additional new construction being made within that limit.

Meanwhile I endeavoured to satisfy Lord Fisher as best I could. I pointed out to him repeatedly that from some points of view a ship finished twelve months before the end of the war was worth twelve times as much as a ship finished one month before its end, and urged continuously that vessels nearest completion must in no way suffer. He was, however, very difficult to feed. In a day he would sketch the design of a capital ship. In a week he would devour a programme and come back asking for more. A tit-bit like an 18-inch experimental gun which I suggested he should make, was snapped up the moment it was mentioned. "I will put it in a light cruiser and drive her 40-knots," he cried. "Hit how you like, when you like, where you like." This was his theme, but what about his doctrine "Armour is vision"? However, I backed him up all I could. He was far more often right than wrong, and his drive and life-force made the Admiralty quiver like one of his great ships at its highest speed.

CHAPTER XXX

THE BOMBARDMENT OF SCARBOROUGH AND HARTLEPOOL

DECEMBER 16, 1914

*"All comes out even at the end of the day, and all comes out
still more even when all the days are over"—VOLTAIRE*

The Captured German Signal Book—Directional Wireless—Sir Arthur Wilson's Task—His Conclusions of December 14—Orders to the Fleets—December 16 Bombardment of Scarborough and Hartlepool—Favourable Position of the British Forces—The Visibility Fails—Groping in the Mist—The German High Sea Fleet at Sea—Disappointment—A Forlorn Hope—What had Happened—The Dawn Situation—A Fateful Hour—Flight of the German Fleet—The British Sweep to the West—The Brush with the Enemy's Light Cruisers—Mischance—Von Hipper Dodges to the North—Escape of the German Battle-Cruisers—The Admiralty Communique—Public Discontent

OUR Intelligence Service has won and deserved world-wide fame. More than perhaps any other Power, we were successful in the war in penetrating the intentions of the enemy. Again and again the forecasts both of the Military and of the Naval Intelligence Staffs were vindicated to the wonder of friends and the chagrin of foes. The three successive chiefs of the Naval Intelligence Division, Captain Thomas Jackson, Rear-Admiral Oliver, and lastly, Captain Reginald Hall, were all men of mark in the service, and continuously built and extended an efficient and profound organization. There were others—a brilliant confederacy—whose names even now are better wrapt in mystery. Our information about German naval movements was principally obtained (1) from the reports of secret agents in neutral and enemy countries and particularly in Germany, (2) from the reports of our submarines, which lay far up in the Heligoland Bight in perilous vigilance, and (3) from a special study we had made of the German wireless. In this we were for a time aided by great good luck.

The Captured German Signal Book

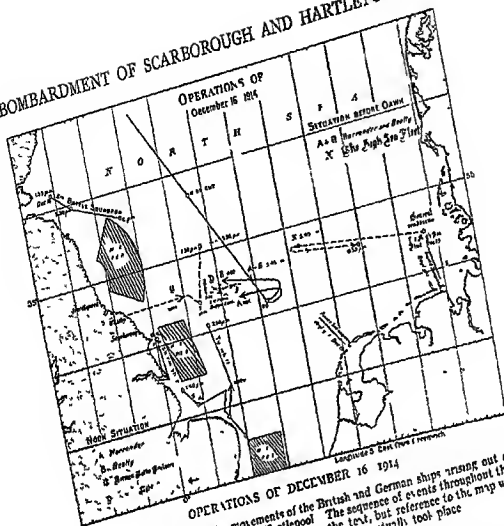
At the beginning of September, 1914, the German light cruiser *Magdeburg*

was wrecked in the Baltic. The body of a drowned German under-officer was picked up by the Russians a few hours later, and clasped in his bosom by arms rigid in death, were the cypher and signal books of the German Navy and the minutely squared maps of the North Sea and Heligoland Bight.

On 6th September the Russian Naval Attaché came to see me. He had received a message from Petrograd telling him what had happened, and that the Russian Admiralty with the aid of the cypher and signal books had been able to decode portions at least of the German naval messages. The Russians felt that as the leading naval Power, the British Admiralty ought to have these books and charts. If we would send a vessel to Alexandrov, the Russian officers in charge of the books would bring them to England. We lost no time in sending a ship, and late on an October afternoon Prince Louis and I received from the hands of our loyal allies these sea-stained priceless documents.

We set on foot at once an organization for the study of the German wireless and for the translating of the messages when taken in. At the head of the organization was placed Sir Alfred Ewing, the Director of

BOMBARDMENT OF SCARBOROUGH AND HARTLEPOOL 435



Naval Education, whose services to the Admiralty in this and other matters were of the first order. The work was of great complexity, as of course the cypher is only one element in the means of pre-serving the secrecy of a message. But gradually during the beginning of November our officers succeeded in translating intelligible portions of various German naval messages. They were mostly of a routine character. "One of our torpedo boats will be running out into square 7T at 8 p.m.," etc. But a careful collection of these scraps pro-vided a body of information from which the enemy's arrangements in the Helgo-land Bight could be understood with a fair degree of accuracy.

The Germans, however, repeatedly changed their codes and keys, and it was only occasionally and for fitful periods that we were able to penetrate them. As the war went on they became increasingly suspicious and devised measures which were completely baffling

While, however, this source of informa-tion lasted, it was obviously of the very greatest value.

Directional Wireless—Sir Arthur Wilson's Task

The German official history shows itself at last well-informed upon this subject (p. 194). "Even if doubt were to exist that the British Admiralty were in possession of the whole secret cyphering system of the German Fleet, it has been cleared away by the reliable news from Petrograd that after the stranding of the *Magdeburg* off Odensholm the secret papers of that ship, which had been thrown overboard, were picked up by the Russians and communicated to their Allies."

Lastly, largely through the foresight of Admiral Oliver, we had begun setting up directional stations in August, 1914. We thus carried to an unrivalled and indeed unapproached degree of perfection our means of fixing the position and, by

successive positions, the course of any enemy ship that used its wireless installation

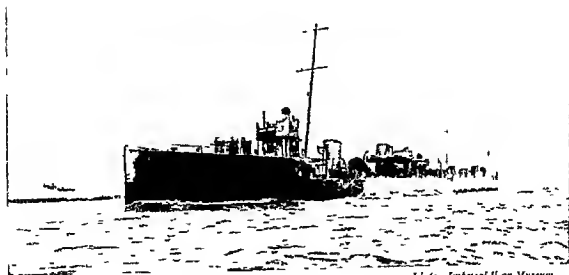
"The English," says Scheer (p 73), "received news through their 'directional stations' which they already had in use, but which were only introduced by us at a much later period. In possessing them the English had a very great advantage in the conduct of the war, as they were thus able to obtain quite accurate information of the locality of the enemy as soon as any wireless signals were sent by him. In the case of a large fleet, whose separate units are stationed far apart and communication between them is essential, an absolute cessation of all wireless intercourse would be fatal to any enterprise."

But between collecting and weighing information, and drawing the true moral therefrom, there is very often an unbridged gap. Signals have been made, the wireless note of a particular ship is heard, lights are to be shown on certain channels at certain hours, ships are in movement, sweeping vessels are active, channels are buoyed, lock-gates are opened—what does it all mean? At

first sight it all appears to be only ordinary routine. Yet taking the items together may lead to a tremendous revelation. Suffice it to say that all these indications, from whatever sources they emanated, were the subject of a special study by Sir Arthur Wilson, and he had the solemn duty of advising our War Group upon them.

His Conclusions of December 14

The silence of the North Sea remained unbroken until the afternoon of Monday, December 14. At about 7 o'clock Sir Arthur Wilson came to my room and asked for an immediate meeting with the First Sea Lord and the Chief of the Staff. It took only a few minutes to gather them. He then explained that his examination of the available intelligence about the enemy indicated the probability of an impending movement which would involve their battle-cruisers and perhaps—though of this there was no positive evidence—have an offensive character against our coasts. The German High Sea Fleet, he stated definitely, appeared not to be involved. The indications were obscure and uncertain.



HMS LURCHER

Photo Imperial War Museum

The *Lurcher* Commodore Keyes' destroyer, which receives frequent mention in this account was launched in 1912 mounted two 4-inch guns and had a maximum speed of 35 knots. During Commodore Keyes' period of service with the Submarine Flotillas *Lurcher* took part in most of the naval exploits in the North Sea throughout the restless months of the autumn and winter of 1914.

There were gaps in the argument. But the conclusion reached after hearing Sir Arthur Wilson was that we should act as if we knew that our assumptions and suppositions were true. It was decided not to move the whole Grand Fleet. A great deal of cruising had been imposed on the Fleet owing to the unprotected state of Scapa, and it was desirable to save wear and tear of machinery and condensers as much as possible. Moreover, the risks of accident, submarine and mine, which were incurred every time that immense organization was sent to sea, imposed a certain deterrent upon its use except when clearly necessary.

Orders to the Fleets

This decision, from which the Commander-in-Chief did not dissent, was, in the light of subsequent events, much to be regretted. But it must be remembered that the information on which the Admiralty was acting, had never yet been tested, that it seemed highly speculative in character, and that for whatever it was worth, it excluded the presence at sea of the German High Sea Fleet. Orders were therefore given immediately for the battle-cruisers and the 2nd Battle Squadron, with a light cruiser squadron and a flotilla of destroyers, to raise steam and to proceed to sea at such hours and at such speeds as to enable them to be in an intercepting position at daylight the next morning. Orders were sent to Commodore Tyrwhitt's Harwich Force to be at sea off Yarmouth, and to Commodore Keyes to place our eight available overseas submarines in a position



Photo Ellis & Fry

ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET SIR ROGER KEYES

One of the most able of the younger generation of naval leaders, Roger Keyes entered the Royal Navy in 1885. He served with distinction throughout the Great War and in particular at the Heligoland Bight, and again during the operations at the Dardanelles. He led the famous raid upon Zeebrugge and Ostend on St. George's Day, April 23, 1918, an exploit for which he received the honour of Knighthood.

off Terschelling to guard against a southward raid. The coastal forces were also put upon the alert.¹

Admiralty to Commander-in-Chief

December 14, 1914 Sent 9 30 p.m.

Good information just received shows German 1st Cruiser Squadron with Destroyers leave Jade River on Tuesday morning early and return on Wednesday

¹ See map on page 435

might. It is apparent from the information that the Battleships are very unlikely to come out.

The enemy force will have time to reach our coast.

Send at once leaving to-night the Battle Cruiser Squadron and Light Cruiser Squadron supported by a Battle Squadron preferably the Second.

At daylight on Wednesday morning they should be at some point where they can make sure of intercepting the enemy on his return.

Tyrwhitt with his Light Cruisers and Destroyers will try to get in touch with enemy off British coast and shadow him keeping Admiral informed.

From our information the German 1st Cruiser Squadron consists of 4 Battle-Cruisers and 5 Light Cruisers and there will possibly be three flotillas of Destroyers.

Acknowledge.

Admiralty to Commodore "T" Harwich

December 15, 1914 Sent 2 5 p m

There is good probability of German Battle-Cruisers, Cruisers and Destroyers being off our coast to-morrow about daybreak.

One M Class Destroyer is to patrol vicinity of North Hinder Lightship from midnight until 9 a m. A second M Class Destroyer is to patrol a line extending 15 miles south magnetic from a position lat 53° 0' N, long 3° 5' E from midnight until 9 a m.

The duty of these Destroyers is to look out for and report the enemy and trust to their speed to escape.

If the weather is too bad, they are to return to Harwich. Report their names.

The 1st and 3rd Flotillas with all available Light Cruisers are to be under way off Yarmouth before daylight to-morrow ready to move to any place where the enemy may be reported from, whether it is to the northward or southward.

Their duty is to get touch with the enemy, follow him and report his position to the Vice-Admiral 2nd Battle Squadron and Vice-Admiral 1st Battle Cruiser Squadron.

The 2nd Battle Squadron, 1st Battle Cruiser Squadron, 3rd Cruiser Squadron

and Light Cruiser Squadron will be in a position m N lat 54° 10' E long 3° 0' at 7 30 a m ready to cut off retreat of enemy.

Should an engagement result your Flotillas and Light Cruisers must endeavour to join our Fleet and deal with enemy Destroyers.

If the weather is too bad for Destroyers use Light Cruisers only and send Destroyers back. Acknowledge.

December 16 Bombardment of Scarborough and Hartlepool.

All measures having been taken on the chance of their being necessary, we awaited during thirty-six hours the events of Wednesday morning with a doubting but expectant curiosity. On the morning of December 16 at about half-past eight I was in my bath, when the door opened and an officer came hurrying in from the War Room with a naval signal which I grasped with dropping hand. "German battle-cruisers bombarding Hartlepool." I jumped out of the bath with exclamations. Sympathy for Hartlepool was mingled with what Mr George Wyndham once called "the anodyne of contemplated retaliation." Pulling on clothes over a damp body, I ran downstairs to the War Room. The First Sea Lord had just arrived from his house next door. Oliver, who invariably slept in the War Room and hardly ever left it by day, was marking the positions on the map. Telegrams from all the naval stations along the coast affected by the attack, and intercepts from our ships in the vicinity speaking to each other, came pouring in two and three to the minute. The Admiralty also spread the tidings and kept the Fleets and flotillas continuously informed of all we knew.

Favourable Position of the British Forces

Everything was now sent to sea or set in motion. The 3rd Battle Squadron (King Edward's) from the Forth was ordered to prevent the enemy escaping to the northward. As a further precaution (though, unless the Germans were driven far to the north, this could hardly be effective in time), the Grand Fleet itself was after all brought out.

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Commodore Tyrwhitt and his cruisers and destroyers of the Harwich Striking Force were directed to join Sir George Warrender, who commanded the Second Battle Squadron, and was the senior Admiral with the intercepting force. The weather was, however, too rough for the destroyers, and only the light cruisers could proceed. Lastly, later in the day Commodore Keyes, who was in the *Lurcher*—one of our latest destroyers and had also with him the destroyer *Firedrake*—was told to take his submarines from his preliminary station off Terschelling into the Helgoland Bight and try to catch the enemy returning.

The bombardment of open towns was still new to us at that time. But, after all, what did that matter now? The war map showed the German battle-cruisers identified one by one within gunshot of the Yorkshire coast, while 150 miles to eastward *between them and Germany*, cutting mathematically their line of retreat, steamed in the exact positions intended, four British battle-cruisers and six of the most powerful battleships in the world forming the 2nd Battle Squadron. Attended and preceded by their cruiser squadrons and flotilla, this fleet of our newest and fastest ships all armed with the heaviest gun then afloat, could in fair weather cover and watch effectively a front of nearly 100 miles. In the positions in which dawn revealed the antagonists, only one thing could enable the Germans to escape annihilation at the hands of an overwhelmingly superior force. And while the great shells crashed into the little houses of Hartlepool and Scarborough, carrying their cruel message of pain and destruction to unsuspecting English homes, only one anxiety dominated the thoughts of the Admiralty War Room.

The Visibility Fails—Groping in the Mist

The word "Visibility" assumed a sinister significance. At present it was quite good enough. Both Warrender and Beatty had horizons of nearly ten miles near the coast fighting was actually in progress at 7,000 yards. There was nothing untoward in the

weather indications. At 9 a.m. the German bombardment ceased, and their ships were soon out of sight of land, no doubt on their homeward voyage. We went on tenter-hooks to breakfast. To have this tremendous prize—the German battle-cruiser squadron whose loss would fatally mutilate the whole German Navy and could never be repaired—actually within our claws, and to have the event all turn upon a veil of mist, was a racking ordeal.

Meanwhile telegraph and telephone were pouring the distress of Hartlepool and Scarborough to all parts of the kingdom, and by half-past ten, when the War Committee of the Cabinet met, news magnified by rumour had produced excitement. I was immediately asked how such a thing was possible. "What was the Navy doing, and what were they going to do?" In reply I produced the chart which showed the respective positions at the moment of the British and German naval forces, and I explained that subject to moderate visibility we hoped that collision would take place about noon. These disclosures fell upon all with a sense of awe, and the Committee adjourned till the afternoon.

At 10.30 the Admiralty learned that the enemy was leaving our coasts and apprised Admiral Warrender accordingly.

"Enemy is probably returning towards Helgoland. You should keep outside minefield and steer so as to cut him off."

But now already ominous telegrams began to arrive. Warrender soon had horizons of only 7,000 yards, Beatty of only 6,000, some of the light cruisers nearer to the coast already mentioned 5,000, and later on 4,000 was signalled. Meanwhile no contact. Noon passed, and then 1 o'clock. The weather got steadily worse. It was evident that the mist curtains were falling over the North Sea. 3,000 yards visibility, 2,000 yards visibility were reported by ships speaking to each other. The solemn faces of Fisher and Wilson betrayed no emotion, but one felt the fire burning within.

I tried to do other work, but it was not much good. Obscure messages were heard from our fleet. Evidently they



THE BOMBARDMENT OF H.

This drawing shows the shelling of Hartholpool by the German cruisers. The details were supplied. The only fortification on land was a battery situated close to the lighthouse. The battery was understood what object the German authorities responsible hoped to serve. It is true that was greatest among the civilian population and no military or naval advantage was or could

were very close to the enemy, groping for him in a mist which allowed vessels to be distinguished only within 2,000 yards. We heard Warrender order his priceless ships to steam through the located German minefield off the Yorkshire coast apparently in an endeavour to close with something just out of sight, just beyond his finger-tips. Then all of a sudden we heard Rear-Admiral Goodenough with the light cruisers report that he had opened fire upon a German light cruiser at 3,000 yards. Hope flared up. Once contact was established,

would it not drag all other events in its train? The prospect of a confused battle at close range had no terrors for the Admiralty. They had only one fear—lest the enemy should escape. Even the proposed movement of the 2nd Battle Squadron through the minefield was received in utter silence.

The German High Sea Fleet at Sea

About half-past one Sir Arthur Wilson said, "They seem to be getting away from us." But now occurred a new development of a formidable kind. At 1.50 we

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12, DECEMBER 16, 1914

From a drawing by Norman H. Wilson

an artist by a resident of Hartlepool who witnessed the bombardment from beginning to end and but escaped damage. The bombardment served no useful purpose and it is difficult to say what casualties were considerable and that many houses were destroyed but as the loss of life had been secured by the attacking force the reason for this exploit must remain a mystery.

learned that the High Sea Fleet was at sea. Up till noon this great Fleet had not spoken. Once she had spoken and the necessary calculations had been made, which took some time, we could not recognize and locate her. She had already in fact advanced far into the North Sea. The apparition of the German Fleet, which as we then supposed was advancing to the support of the German battle-cruisers, entirely altered the balance of strength. Our ten great ships steaming together with their eight squadrons and flotillas, were not only the

strongest but the fastest naval force in the world. No equal German force existed which could at once overtake and overcome them. On the other hand, they were not capable of meeting the High Sea Fleet. The German battle-cruisers were still separated from their fleet by 150 miles, but it seemed to us that a running action begun with the German battle-cruisers, might in the thick weather then prevailing, conceivably lead to a surprise encounter with the main naval power of the enemy. This was certainly not the wish of the



Photo E.N.A.

ADMIRAL VON HIPPER

A distinguished German sailor, von Hipper succeeded to the command of the German High Sea Fleet in 1918. He commanded the German raiding cruisers at the Battle of the Dogger Bank, and was chief of the Reconnaissance Force at Jutland. It fell to Admiral von Hipper to arrange for the surrender of the German Fleet.

Admiralty We instantly warned our squadrons

Admiralty to 2nd Battle Squadron and 1st Battle-Cruiser Squadron

Sent 1 50 p.m.

(Urgent)

High Sea Fleet is out and was in latitude 54° 38' N, longitude 5° 55' E at 0 30 p.m. to-day, so do not go too far to Eastward

These sinister possibilities soon faded like our earlier hopes. The High Sea Fleet was not, as we imagined, coming out, but had long been out and was now retiring.

Disappointment—A Forlorn Hope

At 3 o'clock I went over and told the War Committee what was passing, but

1 1 e about 80 miles west of Heligoland

with what a heavy heart did I cross again that Horse Guards Parade. I returned to the Admiralty. The War Group had re-assembled around the octagonal table in my room. The shades of a winter's evening had already fallen. Sir Arthur Wilson then said, in his most ordinary manner, "Well, there you are, they have got away. They must be about here by now," and he pointed to the chart on which the Chief of the Staff was marking the positions every fifteen minutes. It was evident that the Germans had eluded our intercepting force, and that even their light cruisers with whom we had been in contact had also escaped in the mist. Said Admiral Warrender in his subsequent report, "They came out of one rainstorm and disappeared in another."

It was now nearly 8 o'clock.

Was it then all over? I inquired about our submarines. They had already been collected by Commodore Keyes from their first position and were now moving on to the German line of retreat. But whether the enemy's course would come within their limited range was a matter of luck. Sir Arthur Wilson

then said, "There is only one chance now. Keyes with the *Lurcher* and *Firedrake* is with the submarines. He could probably make certain of attacking the German battle-cruiser squadron as it enters the Bight to-night. He may torpedo one or even two." It seemed indeed a forlorn hope to send these two frail destroyers, with their brave Commodore and faithful crews, far from home, close to the enemy's coast, utterly unsupported, into the jaws of this powerful German force with its protecting vessels and flotillas. There was a long silence. We all knew Keyes well. Then some one said, "It is sending him to his death." Some one else said, "He would be the last man to wish us to consider that." There was another long pause. However,

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Sir Arthur Wilson had already written the following message —

8 12 p m

"We think Heligoland and Amrum lights will be lit when ships are going in. Your destroyers might get a chance to attack about 2 a m or later on the line given you."

The First Sea Lord nodded assent. The Chief of the Staff took it, got up heavily and quitted the room. Then we turned to the ordinary business of the day and also to the decision of what could be told to the public about the event.

Two days later when I received Admiral Keyes in my room at the Admiralty, I said, "We sent you a terrible message the other night. I hardly expected to see you again." "It was terrible," he said, "not getting it till I was nearly home. I waited three hours in the hopes of such an order, and I very nearly did it on my own responsibility," and he proceeded to reproach himself without need.

* * *

What Had Happened

So far I have described this episode of December 16 exactly as it appeared from the War Room of the Admiralty, and as we understood it at the time. But let us now see in essentials what had

¹ It must be explained that in those days the wireless communication with destroyers and still more submarines was not as perfect as it became later on. The *Firedrake* had therefore been stationed in the morning midway between the submarines and Harwich to pass on messages. She had late in the afternoon after the orders to take the submarines into the Bight had reached her, rejoined Commodore Keyes and the link was for the time being broken.

happened.¹ No one could tell at what point on our shores the German attack would fall, and with 500 miles of coast studded with possible objectives to guard, there could be no certain solution. The orders issued by the Commander-in-Chief, however, and the dawn position selected, amply comprehended the design of the enemy.

In pursuance of these orders the

¹ The whole of this operation is described in minute detail in the official British Naval History, and should be studied with the excellent charts by those who are interested in its technical aspect. So complicated is the full story that the lay reader cannot see the wood for the trees. I have endeavoured to render intelligible the broad effects. —W S C.



Photo Stanley & Press Agency

ADMIRAL VON INGENOHL

Von Ingenohl entered the German Navy in 1874, and was promoted Vice-Admiral in 1903. At the outbreak of war in 1914 he was Commander-in-Chief of the High Sea Fleet and retained this command until after the costly action at the Dogger Bank, when he was placed upon the retired list.

2nd Battle Squadron (6 ships) and the Battle Cruiser Squadron (4 ships), together with the 3rd Cruiser Squadron, a Squadron of Light Cruisers and a flotilla, steaming down from Scapa, Cromarty and the Forth, arrived at about 5.30 in the morning of the 16th, two hours and a half before daybreak, at the southern edge of the Dogger Bank. Here in the very centre of the North Sea, almost on a line drawn from Hartlepool to Heligoland, the advanced screen of British destroyers became engaged with German destroyers and light cruisers, and when daylight came they sighted a large German cruiser identified as the *Roos*.¹ Fighting ensued, some of our destroyers were hit, and the Germans retreated to the eastward. Thereupon Admiral Beatty with his battle-cruisers began to chase the *Roos*. From this pursuit he was recalled by the news which reached him and Admiral Warrender from the Admiralty about 9 a.m., that the German battle-cruisers were bombarding Hartlepool and later Scarborough. All the British ships at once turned to the westward and steamed abreast in a long line towards the British coast and the German battle-cruisers, whose interception appeared highly probable.

The Dawn Situation—A Fateful Hour

During the war we were puzzled to understand what the *Roos* and the German light forces were doing on the edge of the Dogger Bank at this hour in the morning. It was an ill-assorted force to be in so exposed a position, and it was not a force, or in a position, which could be of any help to the German cruisers raiding the British coasts. Now we know the answer. The *Roos* and her cruisers and destroyers were part of the advanced screen of the German High Sea Fleet who were out in full force, three squadrons strong, with all their attendant vessels and numerous flotillas. Admiral von Ingenohl in command of the High Sea Fleet had sailed from Cuxhaven after darkness had fallen on the evening of the 15th (between 4 and 5 p.m.) and before dawn on the 16th was pushing

boldly out towards the Dogger Bank in support of his battle-cruisers who, under Admiral von Hipper, were already approaching the British shores.

Had von Ingenohl continued on his course, as was his intention, his scouts would, between 8 and 9 o'clock, in the clear weather of that morning in this part of the North Sea, have come in sight of the British battle-cruisers and the 2nd Battle Squadron coming down from the north. A meeting was almost certain. What would have happened? Admiral von Tirpitz proclaims that this was the one heaven-sent never-recurring opportunity for a battle with the odds enormously in German favour. "On December 16," he wrote a few weeks later, "Ingenohl had the fate of Germany in the palm of his hand. I boil with inward emotion whenever I think of it." We will examine this claim later. Let us first follow the event.

Flight of the German Fleet

Admiral von Ingenohl had already strained his instructions by going so far to sea. An appeal by him against the "Muzzling Order," which the Emperor had issued after the action of the Heligoland Bight (August 28), had recently encountered a rebuff. "The Fleet must be held back and avoid actions which might lead to heavy losses." Such had been the latest *ukase*. And here was the Fleet right out in the middle of the North Sea in the darkness of a December dawn. Suddenly the flashes of guns, English destroyers reported in action with the cruisers of his screen, the screen retiring, the destroyers pursuing—and still two hours before daylight. Von Ingenohl conceived himself in danger of a torpedo attack in darkness. At about 5.30 therefore he turned his whole Fleet about and steamed off south-eastward, and shortly after 6 o'clock, increasingly disquieted by his hampering instructions, but knowing no more of the presence of our squadrons than they of him, he, in the justly chosen words of the British official historian, "fairly turned tail and made for home, leaving his raiding force in the air." Even so, at 6 o'clock the two Fleets were only about 50 miles apart and their light forces in contact! Says Scheer,

¹ See map on page 435 "The Dawn Situation."

who was in command of the German 2nd Squadron (p 71), "Our premature turning on to an east-south-east course had robbed us of the opportunity of meeting certain divisions of the enemy according to the prearranged plan, which is now seen to have been correct"

The British Sweep to the West

There was, however, no compulsion upon Admirals Warrender and Beatty to fight such an action. Their squadrons were moving properly protected by their screen of cruisers and destroyers. In this part of the sea and at this hour the weather was quite clear. They would have known what forces they were in presence of, before they could become seriously engaged. There would not have been any justification for trying to fight the High Sea Fleet of twenty battleships with six battleships and four battle-cruisers, even though these comprised our most powerful vessels. Nor was there any need. The British 2nd Battle Squadron could steam in company at 20 knots, or could escape with forced draught at 21, and only six of von Ingenohl's ships could equal that speed. As for the battle-cruisers, nothing could catch them. The safety of this force acting detached from the main British Fleet was inherent in its speed. Admirals Warrender and Beatty could therefore have refused battle with the German Fleet, and it would certainly have been their duty to do so. Still, having regard to the large numbers of destroyers at sea with the German Fleet and the chances of darkness and weather, the situation at this juncture, as we now know it to have been, gives cause for profound reflection. That it never materialized unfavourably was the reward of previous audacity. The 16th of December lay under the safeguard of the twenty-eighth of August.

We now enter upon the second phase of this extraordinary day. All four British squadrons with their flotilla between 9 and 10 o'clock were steaming towards the British coasts. The German raiding cruisers, having finished their bombardments, were now seeking to return home with the utmost speed. There were two large minefields which

had been laid earlier in the war by the Germans off the Yorkshire coast, and we, having located them and considering them as a protection against raiding, had improved them by laying additional mines. Between these minefields there was opposite Whitby and Scarborough a gap about fifteen miles wide.

Sir John Jellicoe, reflecting upon the whole position from the *Iron Duke* from afar, formed the opinion that the enemy would either try to escape to the northward by steaming up our coast inside the minefield or, much more probably, would come straight out eastward through the gap opposite Whitby and Scarborough. He had ordered the 3rd Battle Squadron from the Forth to close the gap to the northward and this was rapidly being effected. At 10.10 he signalled to Sir George Warrender telling him the position of the gap in the minefields opposite Whitby and adding, "Enemy will in all probability come out there." Admirals Warrender and Beatty were already proceeding on this assumption, which in fact correctly divined what the Germans were doing.

The Brush with the Enemy's Light Cruisers—Mischance

At 11 o'clock, therefore, the four German battle-cruisers, with their light cruisers returning independently 60 miles ahead of them, were steaming due east for Heligoland at their highest speed. At the same time all our four squadrons were steaming due west in a broad sweep directly towards them. The distance between the fleets was about 100 miles, and they were approaching each other at an aggregate speed of over 40 miles an hour. Across the course of our fleet lay the south-west patch of the Dogger Bank on which there was not enough water for battle-cruisers, either British or German. The British sweeping line therefore divided—Beatty and the light cruisers going north of the patch, Warrender with the battleships and the 3rd Cruiser Squadron going south of it. This involved a certain detour and delay in our advance. The weather, moreover, became very bad. The mist descended and the sea ran high.

The German light cruisers were now sighted by our Light Cruiser Squadron

scouting ahead of Beatty through the driving mist and rain-storms. The *Southampton*, the most southerly light cruiser, opened fire and was answered by the enemy. Hopes on board the *Lion* rose. Just at the place and just at the moment when they might expect it, was the enemy's cruiser screen. Clearly the main body was behind them, probably it was not far behind. But now Mischance intervened.

The other three British light cruisers, seeing the *Southampton* engaged to the southward, turned in that direction to join in the fight and the *Birmingham* opened fire. This was not in accordance with the wishes of Admiral Beatty, who wished to keep his scouts in front of him at the time when he must expect to be

closely approaching the enemy's battle-cruisers, and when the danger of missing them was so great. He therefore ordered his light cruisers to return to their stations. The signal, instead of being directed by name to the two vessels who were not engaged, was made general to the Light Cruiser Squadron, and acting on this order the *Southampton* and *Birmingham* both broke off their action with the German cruiser and resumed their places in the line. The German light cruisers turned off to the southward and vanished in the mist. Contact with them was thus lost.

Mischance—Von Hipper Dodges to the North—Escape of the German Battle-Cruisers

Meanwhile however, the battle cruisers

on both sides continued rapidly to approach each other. At 12.15 Admiral von Hipper warned by his light cruisers that an enemy force was immediately in front of him, also turned slightly and to the south-east. Admiral Beatty continued on his course till 12.30. At this moment the two battle-cruiser forces were only 25 miles apart and still rapidly closing. But now again Mischance! The German light cruisers, deflected away to the southward from Beatty, came into contact with the 3rd Cruiser Squadron in front of Warrender. Fire again was opened and returned, and again the enemy cruisers were lost in the thick mist. They reported to von Hipper that on this path also was a blocking force. Thereupon at 12.45 he made "a three-quarters left about turn" (1) I



AFTER THE BOMBARDMENT

In 1914 for the first time for more than a hundred years English towns suffered damage and loss at the hands of a foreign enemy. The photograph is of the harbour lighthouse at Scarborough and shows the damage caused by a direct hit by one of the German shells.

(1) See map on page 435
The Noon Situation



Photo L. N. A.

THE GRAND HOTEL AT SCARBOROUGH

A conspicuous target, the Grand Hotel situated on the sea-front at Scarborough was severely damaged being hit by a number of heavy shells. Here is seen the interior of the restaurant as it appeared shortly after the withdrawal of the German ships.

may employ a cavalry term), and dodged off due north. This by itself would not have saved him. Had Admiral Beatty held on his original course for another quarter of an hour, an action at decisive ranges must have begun before 1 o'clock. But observe what had happened.

At 12.30 Admiral Beatty had received a signal from Sir George Warrender at the moment of the second contact with the German light cruisers, "Enemy cruisers and destroyers in sight." He therefore concluded that the German battle-cruisers had slipped past him to the southward, and acting in addition on the sound principle of keeping between the enemy and the enemy's home at all costs, he too whipped round and steamed back on his course, i.e. eastward, for three-quarters of an hour. At 1.15, hearing that the enemy battle-cruisers had turned north, he too turned north, but contact was never re-established. Von Hipper succeeded in escaping round the northern flank of our squadrons. His light cruisers, so thick was the weather, made their way through the 3rd Cruiser Squadron, passing for a few moments actually in sight of Warrender's battleships.

Thus ended this heart-shaking game of Blind Man's Buff.

It remains only to mention the action of our British submarines. By 3.30 Commodore Keyes had collected four of his boats from their station submerged off Terschelling, and in accordance with Admiralty orders was making for the Heligoland Bight. Eventually he succeeded in placing three boats on the southern side of Heligoland and one on the northern. This solitary boat, under Commander Nasmuth, on the morning of the 17th found itself in the middle of von Hipper's squadron and flotillas returning from their raid and fired two torpedoes at battle-cruisers under very difficult conditions and without effect.

The Admiralty Communique

Such was the episode of the Scarborough and Hartlepool raids. All that we could tell the public was contained in the following communique which was issued in the morning papers of December 17 —

Admiralty, December 16, 9.20 p.m.

This morning a German cruiser force made a demonstration upon the Yorkshire coast, in the course of which

they shelled Hartlepool, Whitby, and Scarborough

A number of their fastest ships were employed for this purpose, and they remained about an hour on the coast. They were engaged by the patrol vessels on the spot.

As soon as the presence of the enemy was reported, a British patrolling squadron endeavoured to cut them off. On being sighted by British vessels the Germans retired at full speed, and, favoured by the mist, succeeded in making good their escape.

The losses on both sides are small, but full reports have not yet been received. The Admiralty take the opportunity of pointing out that demonstrations of this character against unfortified towns or commercial ports, though not difficult to accomplish provided that a certain amount of risk is accepted, are devoid of military significance.

They may cause some loss of life among the civil population and some damage to private property, which is much to be regretted, but they must not in any circumstances be allowed to modify the general naval policy which is being pursued.

Public Discontent

Naturally there was much indignation at the failure of the Navy to prevent, or at least to avenge, such an attack upon our shores. What was the Admiralty

doing? Were they all asleep? Although the bombarded towns, in which nearly five hundred civilians had been killed and wounded, supported their ordeal with fortitude, dissatisfaction was widespread. However, we could not say a word in explanation. We had to bear in silence the censures of our countrymen. We could never admit for fear of compromising our secret information where our squadrons were, or how near the German raiding cruisers had been to their destruction.

One comfort we had. The indications upon which we had acted had been confirmed by events. The sources of information upon which we relied were evidently trustworthy. Next time we might at least have average visibility. But would there be a next time? The German Admiral must have known that he was very near to powerful British ships, but which they were, or where they were, or how near he was, might be a mystery. Would it not also be a mystery how they came to be there? On the other hand, the exultation of Germany at the hated English towns being actually made to feel for the first time the real lash of war might encourage a second attempt. Even the indignation of our own newspapers had a value for this purpose. One could only hope for the best. Meanwhile British naval plans and secrets remained wrapped in impenetrable silence.

CHAPTER XXXI

TURKEY AND THE BALKANS

"Now mark me well—it is provided in the essence of things, that from any fruition of success, no matter what shall come forth something to make a greater struggle necessary"

WALT WHITMAN, "The Open Road"

Britain and Turkey—My Correspondence with Djavid, 1911—Effect of Requisitioning the Turkish Battleships—Nominal Transfer of the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* to Turkey—General Situation in the Balkans—Bulgaria the Dominant Factor—Venizelos Offers a Greek Alliance—Reasons against Acceptance—My Letter to Mr Noel Burton—Menacing Attitude of Turkey—Possibilities of a Greek Military Attack upon Gallipoli—Difficulties of Greek Intervention—Search for an Army—Withdrawal of the British Naval Mission in Constantinople—Letter to Sir Edward Grey of September 23—Alternative Considerations—Secret Turco-German Treaty of August 2—The Turco-German Attack on Russia—Ultimatum to Turkey and Declaration of War—The Bombardment of the Dardanelles Forts of November 3—Impending Turkish Attack upon Egypt—Naval Concentration in the Canal—Repulse of the Turkish Attack—Arrival of the Australians in Egypt—The Prelude to the Dardanelles—General Survey of the War—The Great Strain—The Sudden Relief—The End of the Beginning

IT is now necessary to describe the circumstances attending the entry of Turkey into the war

Britain and Turkey

In Turkey, as in Greece and all the Balkan States except Serbia, there were two violently conflicting parties—pro-German and pro-Entente. The assiduous courting of Turkey by Germany and the condonation of her most atrocious actions had given the Germans great advantages at Constantinople. In addition, the profound instinct of the Turk was to be on the opposite side to his historic and tremendous enemy, Russia. Britain, on the other hand, took no trouble to counteract these formidable tendencies. Large sections of the British Press and public denounced the Turk, often with justice, in unmeasured terms, and no foreign policy based on special relations with Turkey could have stood for a day in a Liberal House of Commons. Notwithstanding all this, British influence in Turkey rested on foundations so deep and ancient, and the impression produced upon the Turkish mind by her obviously disinterested course of action

was so strong that, at any rate, up till the beginning of 1914 she would have welcomed a British alliance. This was the wish, not only of the old Turks, but of the young Turks.

When in the summer of 1909 I had visited Constantinople, I made the acquaintance of the Young Turk leaders and passed several days in the company of Djavid, Talaat and Hahl. I also met at the German Manœuvres of 1910 Enver Pasha, with whom I established amicable relations. All these men seemed animated by a sincere desire to help their country to reform and revive, and I could not help feeling much sympathy for them in their difficulties.

My Correspondence with Djavid, 1911

In 1911, when Turkey was attacked by Italy and her Tripoli Province seized, I received the following letter from Djavid Bey written on behalf of his friends on the then all-powerful Committee of Union and Progress—

Djavid Bey to Mr Churchill

October 29, 1911

My belief in your sincere friendship for

Turkey and the Young Turks leads me to speak of a very important matter to-day

After the Constitution in Turkey those that believed in the beginning of a close friendship between England and Turkey saw with regret the misunderstanding that prevented it. I need not speak of its different causes here. Only the true friends of England in Turkey never ceased from trying to remove it. The actual circumstances appear to be a good occasion for success. The attack of one of the Triple Alliance Powers on our territory has turned the public opinion greatly against the Triple. The pro-English statesmen in Turkey and pro-Turkish statesmen in England could profit of this occasion.

Knowing and believing you to occupy an important and influential position among our friends in England, I will beg you to join our efforts using your

influence in bringing out this friendship. Has the time arrived for a permanent alliance between the two countries? On what basis could it be attempted? Will you please write me your personal views on the matter? They will be considered entirely personal and unofficial. But I will consider myself happy if we can prepare a possible ground for official purposes.

I commended this matter promptly to Sir Edward Grey, but the danger of estranging Italy—apart from domestic and political considerations—made it impossible for him to authorize me to say more than the following —

Mr Churchill to Djavid Bey

Admiralty, November 19, 1911

It is a great pleasure to me to receive your letter, the importance of which I fully recognize. So far as the present lamentable struggle is concerned, we



Photo F.V.A.

ENVER PASHA AT FIELD-MARSHAL VON MACKENSEN'S HEADQUARTERS

This photograph, taken during the war, shows Enver Pasha on the occasion of a visit which he paid to Field-Marshal von Mackensen's Headquarters. Von Mackensen is shown standing in the centre of the group, and Enver Pasha, also in the foreground, is on the German Commander's right. Enver was born in 1879 at Constantinople and entered the Turkish Army in 1896. He was markedly pro-German in sympathy, and when, in the years preceding the Great War, he rose to positions of power in the State, his leaning towards Germany was an important factor in bringing Turkey into the war on the side of the Central Powers.

have definitely declared our neutrality, and it is not to be expected that we shall alter a policy so gravely decided. My answer therefore to your question must be that at the present time we cannot enter upon new political relations. In the future the enormous interests which unite the two great Mussulman Powers should keep us in touch. That is our wish, the feeling of British public opinion, as you will have seen from recent manifestations of it, opposes no barrier to that wish, if only the Turkish Government will not alienate it by reverting to the oppressive methods of the old regime or seeking to disturb the British status quo as it now exists, and you and your friends, whom I remember to have met with so much pleasure, should bear in mind that England, almost alone among European States, seeks no territorial expansion, and that alone among them she retains the supremacy of the sea. We earnestly desire to revive and maintain our old friendship with

Turkey, which while we retain that supremacy should be a friendship of value.

I must apologize for the delay in answering your letter, which was due to the importance of its nature.

In the years which followed the Young Turks looked towards Germany, and here they were very powerfully swayed by their military instincts and training.



Photo Stanley & Press Agency

KING FERDINAND OF BULGARIA

The former ruler of Bulgaria was the youngest son of Augustus, Prince of Saxe Coburg Gotha. He became king in 1887, and his proclamation of Bulgaria's independence in 1908 was one of the coups which disturbed the political equilibrium of Europe during the critical years which preceded 1914. On the outbreak of the Great War Ferdinand pursued a policy of caution, but eventually threw in his country on the side of the Central Powers, declaring war on October 13, 1915.

They rightly regarded Germany as the leading military Power. Many of them had received their military education in Berlin, and they were spellbound by the splendour and authority of Prussian organization. They saw the Russian giant ever growing to the east and to the north. And if England stood aloof, where else could Turkey find protection except through the German sword? I do not see what else we could have



KING CONSTANTINE OF GREECE

Photo E.N.A.

The King of Greece is here seen discussing the military situation during the Balkan War of 1912-13. Constantine's reign was a troubled one marked by serious differences with the powerful Greek statesman Venizelos. His declaration of Greece's neutrality during the Great War was an unpopular step which ran counter to the wishes of Venizelos, the real leader of Greece, and which eventually led to the King's dethronement.

expected. Therefore, from the very beginning of the war I hoped for nothing from Turkey and apprehended much.

Effect of Requisitioning the Turkish Battleships

The first events of the war obviously added to the tension between the two countries. We had found it necessary, as has been described, to requisition the two Turkish battleships which were building in British yards. The money for these ships had been largely raised by public subscription in Turkey, and their sequestration angered not only the Turkish Government but large numbers of patriotic Turks throughout the country. Moreover, in the struggles which ensued in Constantinople and in the Turkish Cabinet between the Turkish war party and those who favoured neutrality, this episode seemed to have weight.

I did my best, with the approval of the Cabinet, to allay the legitimate heart-burnings of the Turkish Ministry of Marine. These efforts were seconded by Admiral Limpus, the Head of the British Naval Mission to Turkey, whose relations with the Turks were extremely good and whose mission had won much esteem. But with the arrival at the Dardanelles of the *Goeben* and the *Breslau*, a new and formidable complication arose. These two ships, which had presented themselves at the entrance to the Straits about 5 o'clock on the afternoon of August 20, were received by the Turkish authorities. They were piloted through a passage in the minefield and proceeded to Constantinople. The British Government had a right to assume that they would be interned and disarmed. In view of the delicacy of the situation, however, it was thought prudent to accept a less drastic solution. The

following minutes tell their own tale —

Nominal Transfer of the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* to Turkey

August 12, 1914

Sir Edward Grey

Goeben and Breslau

In all the circumstances, the Admiralty

agree that the sale or transfer of these two vessels to the Turkish flag should be allowed, provided that the transference is *bona fide* and permanent. The essential condition to insist on is that all the German officers and men of the crews of both ships must, without exception, be at once repatriated to Germany under parole not to serve again during the war. We cannot agree to any exceptions being made, whether of officers or skilled ratings, or of the ordinary crew. The British Embassy, assisted if necessary by the English Naval Mission, should assure themselves that all the Germans leave at once, and that the ships are definitely handed over to the Turkish Navy. In these circumstances, the Admiralty would allow the [British] Naval Mission to remain as requested by the

Grand Vizier. The Turks could also be informed that after the war is over, we should be quite ready in principle, and as far as we can now foresee, to transfer one or both of the two ships we have requisitioned to their flag, and that we are quite ready to negotiate with them at the present time in regard to payment of the sums due to Turkey.

W S C



ELEUTHERIOS VENIZELOS

Photo Glasfield

The strong man of Greece and one of the most famous statesmen in Europe. Venizelos desired ardently to bring Greece into the Great War on the side of the Allies. He was prepared at once to render practical and valuable aid to the Allied cause by immediate participation in an attack upon the Dardanelles. For reasons which at the time seemed weighty this offer when made was not accepted. Had the Allied Powers seen their way clear at once to agree to Venizelos's proposals it is possible that the war might have ended in 1915 or earlier.

Sir Edward Grey

August 17, 1914

The situation about *Goeben* and *Breslau* is extremely unsatisfactory. Their sale to Turkey is probably itself a breach of neutrality. The vital condition of the repatriation of the German complements down to the last man has not taken place, probably the whole of the German crews are still on board, and it is admitted that "experts are to be retained." Meanwhile, the British Naval Mission has been banished from the Turkish ships committed to their charge, and forbidden to go on board the two ex-Germans. As long as the *Goeben* and *Breslau* remain in this condition, and until we know that the whole of the German crews are definitely repatriated, we have to keep two British [battle] cruisers, which are urgently needed elsewhere, waiting with other vessels outside the Dardanelles. This is a situation which cannot continue indefinitely.

W S C

* * * *

General Situation in the Balkans— Bulgaria the Dominant Factor

The Turkish position could only be judged in relation to the general situation in the Balkans, and this could not be understood unless the dominant facts of pre-war Balkan history were continually borne in mind. The first Balkan war saw Bulgaria triumphantly bearing the brunt of the attack on Turkey. While her armies were advancing on Constantinople against the best troops of the Turkish Empire, the Greeks and Serbians were overrunning the comparatively weakly-held regions of Thrace and Macedonia.

The Bulgarians, having fought the greatest battles and sustained by far the heaviest losses, found themselves finally checked before Constantinople, and, turning round, beheld almost the whole of the conquered territory in the hands of their Allies.

The destination of this territory had been regulated before the war by treaty between the four belligerent minor States. Adrianople had not however surrendered,



Photo E V 4

ADRIANOPLI

The scene of much bitter fighting in the Balkan Wars. At one time the capital of the Ottoman Empire it was taken from the Turks by the Bulgarians and Serbs in 1913. Adrianople was later recovered by the Turks during the second Balkan War in July 1913, Bulgaria being no longer in a position to oppose them.

and in obedience to the treaty the Serbians came to the aid of the Bulgarian forces, and played a prominent part in the capture of that fortress. Both the Serbians and the Greeks utilized the argument that the war had been prolonged through the need of reducing Adrianople as a ground for claiming to repudiate in important particulars the pre-war treaty, and meanwhile they retained occupation of all the conquered districts in their possession.

The Bulgarians were quick to repay this claim with violence. They attacked the Greeks and Serbians, were defeated by the more numerous armies of these two Powers, and in the moment of extreme weakness and defeat were invaded from the other side by Roumania, who, having taken no part in the conflict, had intact armies to strike with. At the same time the Turks advanced in Thrace, and led by Enver Pasha recaptured Adrianople. Thus the end of the second Balkan war saw Bulgaria stripped not only of almost all her share of the territory conquered from the Turks (and this entirely divided between Greece and Serbia), but even

her native province of the Dobroudja had been wrested from her by Roumania. The terrible cruelties and atrocities which had been perpetrated on both sides in the internecine struggle that followed the expulsion of the Turks had left a river of blood between the Greeks and Serbians on the one hand and the Bulgarians on the other.

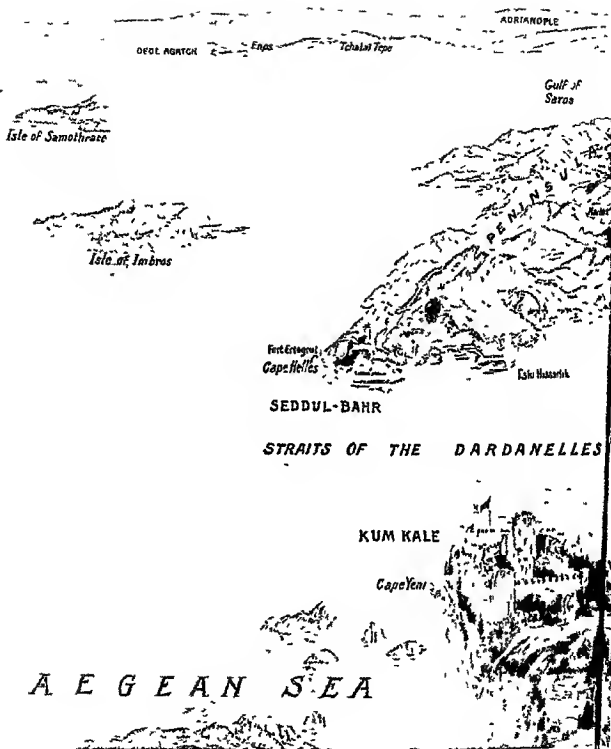
It is possible that no nation ever contemplated its fortunes with more profound and desperate resolve than the Bulgarians at this juncture. All their sacrifices had been useless and worse than useless. All the fruits of their conquests had gone to aggrandise their rivals. They had been, as they considered, stabbed in the back and blackmailed by Roumania, to whom they had given no provocation of any kind. They saw the great Powers, England in the van, forbid the return of the Turk to Adrianople without offering the slightest attempt to make their words good. They saw not only Salonica, but even Kavala, seized by the Greeks. They saw large districts inhabited largely by the Bulgarian race newly liberated from the



TURKISH TROOPS NEAR ADRIANOPLE

Photo E.N.A.

A photograph taken during the Balkan War showing Turkish infantry in column of route. The Turkish infantryman is a magnificent defensive fighter, and the Nizami or first line troops of the pre-war Turkish army, were soldiers of the finest quality.



A GENERAL VIEW OF THE

The illustration shown here is reproduced from a drawing outlining the main features of an is not pretended that the artist has made any serious attempt to be topographically accurate into the war comes to be considered The idea of forcing the Dardanelles was from the course of the war The successful accomplishment of this enterprise would in all probability with the consequent saving of thousands of lives and all the financial and military strain their train The threat to Egypt and the Suez Canal would have at on

Turks pass under the yoke—to them scarcely less odious—of Serbians and Greeks. It was in these circumstances that the Bulgarian army, in the words of King Ferdinand, "furl'd its standards" and retired to wait for better days.

This warlike and powerful Bulgaria, with its scheming King and its valiant peasant armies, brooding over what seemed to them intolerable wrongs, was the dominant factor in the Balkans in 1914 and 1915.

* * * *

Venizelos Offers a Greek Alliance

On August 19, 1914, Monsieur Venizelos, then Prime Minister of Greece, with the approval which he had, astonishing to relate, obtained of King Constantine, formally placed at the disposal of the Entente powers all the naval and military resources of Greece from the moment when they might be required. He added that this offer was made in a special sense to Great Britain with whose interests those of Greece were indissolubly bound. The resources of Greece, he said, were small, but she could dispose of 250,000 troops, and her navy and her ports might be of some use.

This magnanimous offer, made as it was while all was so uncertain, and even before the main battle in France had been joined, greatly attracted me. No doubt on the one hand it was a serious thing to run the risk of adding Turkey to our enemies. On the other hand, the Greek army and navy were solid factors, and a combination of the Greek armies and fleet with the British Mediterranean squadron offered a means of settling the difficulties of the Dardanelles in a most prompt and effective manner.

The Gallipoli Peninsula was then only weakly occupied by Turkish troops, and the Greek General Staff were known to be ready with well-thought-out plans for its seizure. Moreover, it seemed to me that anyhow Turkey was drifting into war with us. Her conduct in regard to the *Göeben* and *Breslau* continued openly fraudulent. The presence of these two vessels themselves in German hands in the Sea of Marmora offered a means of putting decisive pressure on the neutrality party in Constantinople. If we were not

going to secure honest Turkish neutrality, then let us, in the alternative, get the Christian States of the Balkans on our side. Could we not get them on our side? Could we not make a Balkan confederation of Serbia, Greece, Bulgaria and Roumania? Whatever happened, we ought not to fall between two stools.

Reasons against Acceptance

Sir Edward Grey, however, after very anxious consideration, moved the Cabinet to decline Monsieur Venizelos' proposal, as he feared, no doubt with weighty reasons, that an alliance with Greece meant immediate war with Turkey and possibly Bulgaria. He feared that it might jeopardize Greece without our being able to protect her. He was anxious above all things not to foster a Greek enterprise against Constantinople in such a way as to give offence to Russia. And, lastly, he hoped that Sir Louis Mallet, who was in close and intimate relations with the Grand Vizier and the leaders of the Turkish neutrality party in Constantinople, would after all be able to keep the peace. Certainly nothing could exceed the skill and perseverance with which the British Ambassador laboured. It followed from this that we should maintain the very handsome offer we had made in common with France and Russia at the outbreak of the war to guarantee the integrity of the Turkish Empire in return for her faithful neutrality.

I naturally conformed to the Cabinet decision, but with increasing misgivings. I still continued to work and hope for a Balkan confederation. I gave the following letter, of which the Foreign Secretary approved, to Mr Noel Buxton, who was starting for a propaganda tour in the Balkans. Of course in view of our decision about Turkey, it could refer only to the common interests of these States against Austria.

My Letter to Mr Noel Buxton

August 31, 1914

It is of the utmost importance to the future prosperity of the Balkan States that they should act together. This is the hour when the metal can be cast into the mould. It is only by reclaiming

from Austria territories which belong naturally to the Balkan races that the means can be provided to satisfy the legitimate needs and aspirations of all the Balkan States. Without taking Austrian territory, there is no way by which any Balkan State can expand except by internecine war. But the application of the principle of nationality to the Southern Provinces of Austria will produce results so advantageous to the Balkan States that the memory and the consequences of former quarrels could be assuaged for ever.

The creation of a Balkan Confederation comprising Bulgaria, Serbia, Roumania, Montenegro and Greece, strong enough to play an effective part in the destinies of Europe, must be the common dream of all their peoples. The result of this war is not doubtful. Sooner or later, Germany will be starved and beaten. Austria will be resolved into its component parts. England has always won in the end, and Russia is unconquerable. England has been the friend of every Christian State in the Balkans during all their years of struggle and suffering. She has no interests of her own to seek in the Balkan Peninsula. But with her wealth and power she will promote and aid every step which is taken to build up a strong union of the Christian peoples, like that which triumphed in the first Balkan War. By acting together in unity and good faith the Balkan States can now play a decisive part, and gain advantages which may never again be offered. By disunion they will simply condemn themselves to tear each other's throats without profit or reward, and left to themselves will play an utterly futile part in the destinies of the world.

I want you to make your friends in Greece and in Bulgaria realize the brilliant but fleeting opportunity which now presents itself, and to assure them that England's might and perseverance will not be withheld from any righteous effort to secure the strength and union of the Balkan peoples.

Menacing Attitude of Turkey

In the early days of September it seemed highly probable that Turkey,

under the influence of the German advance on Paris, would make war upon us and upon Greece whatever we did. I began immediately to prepare for the event.

Mr. Churchill to General Sir Charles Douglas, Chief of the Imperial General Staff

September 1, 1914

Secret

I arranged with Lord Kitchener yesterday that two officers from Admiralty should meet two officers from the Director of Military Operations Department of the War Office to-day to examine and work out a plan for the seizure by means of a Greek army of adequate strength of the Gallipoli peninsula, with a view to admitting a British Fleet to the Sea of Marmora.

In his absence I would ask you to give the necessary directions, as the matter is urgent, and Turkey may make war on us at any moment.

The meeting can take place either here or at the War Office as soon as you can arrange with our Chief of Staff. I will myself explain verbally to the Committee the subject on which his Majesty's Government desire information.

The Director of Military Operations, General Callwell, replied on the 3rd, on behalf of the General Staff, that the operation of seizing the Gallipoli peninsula would be an extremely difficult one. Sixty thousand men would be required, thirty thousand of whom should be landed in the first instance, should gain as much ground as possible, should prepare landing stages, and hold their own for a week while the transports returned to Greece for the second thirty thousand. On this basis the operation was considered feasible. These estimates were not excessive, and the Greeks could certainly provide a considerably larger force if necessary.

Thereupon I telegraphed, with the approval of the Foreign Office, to Rear-Admiral Mark Kerr, the head of our naval mission to Greece, as follows —

September 4

In event of war with Turkey, with England and Greece as Allies, Admiralty

consider it essential, as a Staff precaution, that the question of the right war policy to be followed should be examined, in consultation with Greek General and Naval Staff, leaving political prohibilities to be decided by respective Governments

Admiralty give you permission to do this, should you be approached by the Greek Government. In principle, the Admiralty views are as follows

In order to provide unquestionable and decisive superiority over the German and Turkish vessels, the Greek Fleet would be offered, as reinforcements, a squadron and flotilla, and the whole of the combined Fleets would be placed under your command, with the *Indomitable* as your Flagship. Should circumstances demand it, you would be reinforced with any class of vessel necessary and to any extent

In order that the right and obvious method of attack upon Turkey (*viz* by striking immediately at the heart) may be carried out, the Greek Army would, under superiority of sea predominance, have to seize the Gallipoli Peninsula, thus opening the Dardanelles and enabling the Anglo-Greek Fleet, in the Sea of Marmora, to fight and sink the Turco-German ships, and from there the whole situation can be dominated, in combination with the Black Sea Fleet of the Russians and their military forces

The Admiralty desire that, in consultation with you, the Greek Naval and Military Experts should immediately examine this enterprise, and that you should report fully by telegraph to the Admiralty what are the general views of the Greek Government upon it, and what, in their opinion, would be the force required to carry it out, assuming that safe transportation is assured. Should we provide the necessary transports, or in what time and to what extent could Greece do so? Have they any alternative suggestions?

Possibilities of a Greek Military Attack upon Gallipoli—Difficulties of Greek Intervention

The Rear-Admiral's reply reached me through the Foreign Office on the 9th

The Greek General Staff have been consulted on the subject of your telegram, and I agree with them in their opinion that, if Bulgaria does not attack Greece, the latter can take Gallipoli with force at their disposal. Greece will not trust Bulgaria unless she at the same time attacks Turkey with all her force. They will not accept Bulgaria's guarantee to remain neutral.

Subject to above conditions, plan for taking Dardanelles Straits is ready.

Greece can provide necessary transports for troops. A British squadron of two battle cruisers, one armoured cruiser, three light cruisers and flotilla of destroyers will be needed to assist General Staff and myself originally formulated this plan, but operation has become greater since Turkey has mobilized and obtained German ships.

He mentioned as an alternative the region of Alexandretta.

Search for an Army

On September 6 Monsieur Venizelos told our Minister in Athens that he was not afraid of a single-handed attack from Turkey by land as the Greek General Staff were confident of being able to deal with it. The Greek Government had received from Sofia positive assurances of definite neutrality, but did not trust them. They would, however, be satisfied with a formal protest by the Bulgarian Government against a violation of Bulgarian territory by Turkish troops proceeding to attack Greece. If, however, Bulgaria joined Turkey while Serbia was occupied with Austria, the situation would be critical. On this I pointed out to the Foreign Secretary on the same date that a Russian Army Corps could easily be brought from Archangel, from Vladivostok, or with Japanese consent from Port Arthur to attack the Gallipoli Peninsula. "The price to be paid in taking Gallipoli would no doubt be heavy, but there would be no more war with Turkey. A good army of 50,000 men and sea-power—that is the end of the Turkish menace."

But it was easier to look for armies than to find them. Sir Edward Grey replied by sending me a telegram that



Photo E. A. A.

CONSTANTINOPLE THE GOLDEN HORN

A fine reproduction from a photograph of Constantinople and the Golden Horn taken from a Turkish cemetery. Constantinople was originally the ancient city of Byzantium. Constantine the Great Roman Emperor selecting this site for his capital completed his new city in A.D. 330 and renamed it Constantinople. During its long and varied history this famous city has played its part in the stories of some of the most illustrious races of mankind. The Greeks the Romans the Goths and the Huns, the Persians and the Turks all have occupied or attempted to occupy it. One of the main key cities to the Middle East Constantinople possesses in the Golden Horn a natural harbour capable of affording anchorage to the biggest ships.



AT THE RECRUITING TABLE IN TURKEY

Photo F.V.A.

Whatever may have been the opinions of the ruling classes as they were in Turkey in 1914 many of the older Turks went but unwillingly to war. Evidence from letters found on Turks killed in Gallipoli showed clearly the doubts as to the outcome present in the minds of the elders at home. However this may be Turkey, during the war recruited some two and a half million men, the vast majority of whom fought with constancy.

had been received that very morning from Petrograd stating that in view of the very large number of German troops which were being transferred from the western to the eastern theatre, Russia was calling up every available man from Asia and the Caucasus, and was only leaving one Army Corps in the latter. Greece would therefore, according to the Petrograd telegram, have to bear the brunt of the war single-handed unless she could placate Bulgaria by territorial concessions. He added on the back of my note, "You will see from the telegram from St. Petersburg that Russia can give no help against Turkey. I do not like the prospect in the Mediterranean at all, unless there is some turn of the tide in France."

It is only by faithful study of this problem that its immense difficulties are portrayed. Lest it should be thought that I underrated the gravity of a war with Turkey, it must be remembered that I had convinced myself that Turkey

would attack us sooner or later, and that I was also proceeding on the belief that the German invasion of France would be brought to a standstill. Both these assumptions proved true. I do not claim that my view was the wisest, but only to expose it to historical judgment. The policy emerging from such a view would of course at this juncture have offered Cyprus to Greece in compensation for her offering Kavala to Bulgaria. It would have put the most extreme pressure on Serbia to make concessions to Bulgaria in Monastir. Whether these measures would have succeeded at this time I do not pronounce.

Withdrawal of the British Naval Mission in Constantinople

By September 9 the behaviour of the Turks about the *Goeben* and *Breslau* had become so openly defiant that it became necessary to withdraw the British Naval Mission, who were exposed to daily insolences at the hands of the Germans.

and of the Turkish war party. It was my intention to appoint the head of the mission, Rear-Admiral Lampus, to command the squadron watching the Dardanelles, and orders were sent definitely to that effect. This project was not, however, pursued, it being thought that it would be unduly provocative to employ on this station the very officer who had just ceased to be the teacher of the Turkish Fleet. No doubt this was a weighty argument, but in howing to it we lost the advantages of having at this fateful spot the Admiral who of all others knew the Turks, and knew the Dardanelles with all its possibilities. It was a small link in a long chain. Delay was caused and I had to make fresh arrangements.

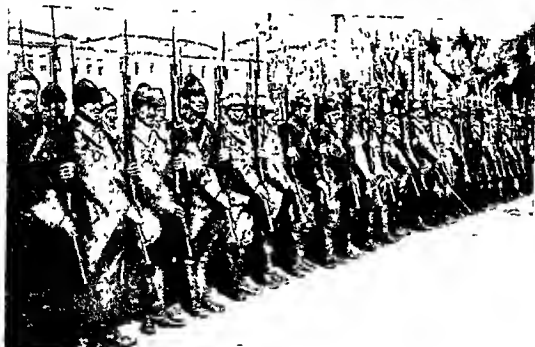
On September 21, I telegraphed to Vice-Admiral Carden, who was in charge of the Malta Dockyard —

Assume command of the squadron off Dardanelles. Your sole duty is to sink *Goeben* and *Breslau*, no matter what flag they fly, if they come out of Dardanelles. We are not at war with Turkey but the

German Admiral Souchon is now Commander-in-Chief Turkish Navy and Germans are controlling and largely manning it. Turks have been told that any Turkish ships which come out with *Goeben* and *Breslau* will be equally attacked by us. You are authorized to act accordingly without further declaration or parley. You must deal at your discretion with any minor Turkish war vessel which may come out alone from Dardanelles, either ordering her back or allowing her to proceed as you may think fit, remembering that we do not want to pick a quarrel with Turkey unless her hostile intention is clear.

Indomitable will be diverted from convoy off Crete and ordered to join your squadron. French Commander-in-Chief has been requested to send 2 battleships of *Patrie* class to reinforce your flag.

The victory of the Marne, although afterwards discounted by adverse events, checked the developments in the Near East. Turkey was steadied for the moment, and her attitude towards Greece became less menacing. This



TURKISH TROOPS AN INSPECTION

Photo E. V. A.

This photograph, like that on p. 455 conveys a good impression of the hardy type of man upon which the Turkish Empire relied in times of stress. Ineffectual, even poor as Turkish organization behind the lines often proved itself to be the infantryman in the front line trench or in the desert fought marched and endured so long as a ration or cartridge remained. Such was the indomitable foe that barred the passage to Constantinople.

however produced a corresponding cooling at Athens about joining in the European war. From the middle of September the conditions throughout the Balkans had declined again from crisis into suspense. They remained however fundamentally vicious.

I continued increasingly to press as opportunity served for a policy of uniting the Balkan States without reference to what might happen in Turkey.

Letter to Sir Edward Grey of
September 23

On September 23, I wrote to Sir Edward Grey as follows —

Mr Churchill to Sir Edward Grey

September 23, 1914

I must write you a line about Turkey.

We are suffering very seriously from Turkish hostility. Our whole Mediterranean Fleet is tied to the Dardanelles. We are daily trying to buy Turkish neutrality by promises and concessions. Meanwhile the German grip on Turkey tightens, and all preparations for war go steadily forward. But all this would in itself be of minor consequence but for the fact that in our attempt to placate Turkey we are crippling our policy in the Balkans. I am not suggesting that we should take aggressive action against Turkey or declare war on her ourselves, but we ought from now to make our arrangements with the Balkan States, particularly Bulgaria, without regard to the interests or integrity of Turkey.

The Bulgarians ought to regain the Turkish territory they lost in the second Balkan War, and we ought to tell them that if they join with Roumania, Greece, and Serbia in the attack upon Austria and Germany, the Allied Powers will see that they get this territory at the peace. We always said that Adrianople should never fall back into Turkish hands, and the strongest possible remonstrances were addressed to the Porte by you at the time. There is therefore nothing wrong or inconsistent in our adopting this position.

If we win the war, we shall be quite strong enough to secure this territory for Bulgaria, and Turkey's

conduct to us with repeated breaches of neutrality would release us from any need of considering her European interests. Like you, I sympathize deeply with Mallet in the futile and thankless task on which he is engaged. I do not know what the result will be, but I am sure it is not worth while sacrificing the bold and decisive alternative of throwing in our lot frankly with the Christian States of the Balkans to get the kind of neutrality which the Turks have been giving us, and for which we are even asked to pay and be grateful. The whole tone of the telegrams from Roumania and Bulgaria is hopeful. I do most earnestly beg you not to be diverted from the highway of sound policy in this part of the world, both during the war and at the settlement, by wanderings into the labyrinth of Turkish duplicity and intrigue. All I am asking is that the interests and integrity of Turkey shall no longer be considered by you in any efforts which are made to secure common action among the Christian Balkan States.

Alternative Considerations

Judged in afterlight these views can hardly be contested. I have never swerved from them, but the reader should understand the other arguments by which the Cabinet was ruled. The loyal desire not to spread the war to regions still uncursed, the dangers in India of a British quarrel with Turkey, our awful military weakness in 1914, Lord Kitchener's expressed wish to keep the East as quiet as possible till the two Indian Divisions were safely through the Suez Canal, the difficulties of winning the support of Greece, and particularly of King Constantine, without exciting the suspicion and jealousies of Russia about Constantinople, and, lastly, the doubts—admittedly substantial—whether Bulgaria and King Ferdinand could ever, in the absence of substantial military successes in the main theatres or strong local intervention by Allied forces in the Balkans, be detached from the Teutonic system.

When I talked these questions over at the time with Sir Edward Grey it was upon this last argument that he was

most inclined to dwell "Until Bulgaria believes that Germany is not going to win the war, she will not be moved by any promises of other people's territory which we may make her" The swift overrunning of Northern France by the German armies, the withdrawal of the French Government to Bordeaux, the fall of Antwerp, the tremendous victories of Hindenburg over the Russians, were events all of which dominated the Bulgarian equally with the Turkish mind. England, without an army, with not a soldier to spare, without even a rifle to send, with only her Navy and her money, counted for little in the Near East. Russian claims to Constantinople directly crossed the ambitions both of King Ferdinand and of King Constantine. In all the Balkans only one *clairvoyant* eye, only the genius of Venizelos, discerned the fundamental moral issues of the struggle, measured justly the relative powers of the mighty combatants, and appraised at their true value both the victories of the German Army, and the Sea Power under which were slowly gathering the latent but inexhaustible resources of the British Empire.

So the Allies continued to wait and hope at Constantinople, and the days slipped swiftly by.

Secret Turco-German Treaty of August 2

Not till long after did we learn the blasting secret which would have destroyed all British and Russian doubts. Already in the crisis of July the leaders of the Young Turk party had been in vital negotiation with the Germans, and on August 2 an alliance had been signed between Germany and Turkey. Thus all this time we were deceived. Whether anything that it was in our power to do could have averted the evils must always remain a disputed question, but that the evils were not averted is certain. In the end we had all the evils of both courses and the advantages of no course. We were forced into a war with Turkey, which ultimately became of enormous magnitude. Greece was thrown into inextricable confusion. Serbia was overrun. Bulgaria, joining hands with her recent enemies the Turks, became our foe. And Roumania, when she finally

came in isolated upon the allied side, suffered the direst vengeance at German hands. A more fearful series of tragedies has scarcely ever darkened the melancholy page of history.

The Turco-German Attack on Russia

It must not be thought that the action of Turkey was inspired solely by treachery and duplicity. Two parties were struggling for mastery in the capital, but in view of the Treaty of Alliance which had been signed on August 2, there could have been no doubt about the final outcome. Moreover, in the *Goeben* and *Breslau*, to say nothing of the Turkish Fleet, Enver Pasha and the war party had the means to force the Turkish Government to adhere to the covenants which they had entered into on her behalf. By the middle of October we learnt that Turkish preparations to invade Egypt were actually being made. We learned also from a secret source, that the Austrian Ambassador at Constantinople had received solemn assurances from Enver that Turkey would enter the war against the Entente at an early date. At the end of October, our outposts beyond the Suez Canal had to be withdrawn in face of gathering Turkish forces, and finally, about October 27, the *Breslau*, with the Turkish cruiser *Hamidieh* and a division of destroyers, followed by the *Goeben*, steamed into the Black Sea, and on the 29th and 30th bombarded the Russian fortress of Sevastopol, sank a Russian transport, raided the harbour of Odessa, torpedoed a gunboat, and, lastly, practically destroyed Novorossisk, its oil tanks and all the shipping in the port.

Ultimatum to Turkey and Declaration of War

On this the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople immediately demanded his passports, and the British Foreign Office at 8.15 p.m. on October 30, after reciting its many griefs against the Turks, especially their invasion of the Sinai Peninsula and their misconduct about the *Goeben*, sent an ultimatum requiring repudiation of these acts and the dismissal of the German Military and Naval Missions within twelve hours. The

Admiralty conformed to this decision by telegraphing to all Admirals concerned as follows —

(October 31, 1914 12 35 a m)

Orders sent Ambassador Constantinople 8 15 p m October 30 to present ultimatum to Turkey expiring at end of 12 hours Do not yourself commence hostilities without further orders

Add to Vice-Admiral Carden (*Indefatigable*)

You may therefore expect Embassy to be leaving very shortly

Russia declared war on Turkey at the expiry of the ultimatum, and the British and French Ambassadors, in company with their Russian colleague, left Constantinople on November 1—the same day on which at the other end of the world the battle of Coronel was being fought Naval orders to commence hostilities were sent, in concert with the Foreign Office, in conformity with the expiry of the ultimatum

Admiralty to
all Ships

October 31, 1914
(sent 5 5 p m)

Commence
hostilities at
once against
Turkey Ac-
knowledge

The Bombard-
ment of the
Dardanelles
Forts of
November 3

On November 1 two of our destroyers, entering the Gulf of Smyrna, destroyed a large armed Turkish yacht which was lying by the jetty carrying mines, and late that same day Admiral Carden was instructed to

bombard the outer Dardanelles forts at long range on the earliest suitable occasion This bombardment was carried out on the morning of November 3 The two British battle-cruisers, firing from a range beyond that of the Turkish guns, shelled the batteries on the European side at Sedd-el-Bahr and Cape Helles The French battle-ships fired at the Asiatic batteries at Kum Kali and Orkanieh About eighty rounds were fired altogether, resulting in considerable damage to the Turkish forts, and in several hundred casualties to the Turks and Germans who manned them

The reasons for this demonstration have been greatly canvassed They were simple though not important A British squadron had for months been waiting outside the Dardanelles War had been declared with Turkey It was natural that fire should be opened upon the enemy as it would be on the fronts of hostile armies It was necessary to know accurately the effective ranges of

the Turkish guns and the conditions under which the entrances to the blockaded port could be approached It has been stated that this bombardment was an imprudent act, as it was bound to put the Turks on their guard and lead them to strengthen their defences That the organization of the defences of the Straits should be improved steadily from the declaration of war was inevitable To what extent this process



Photo. As newspaper illustrations

TURKISH GUNNERS OBSERVING IN 1914

The German Military Mission in Turkey headed by General Liman von Sanders was responsible for a vast improvement noticeable in the Turkish Army between the Balkan Wars and the outbreak of the Great War A steady infiltration of German officer and NCO instructors were able to work wonders with the soldier-like material at their disposal The men shown above are wearing the then new Turkish uniform and are engaged in observing and range finding for a battery on their flank

was stimulated by the bombardment is a matter of conjecture. When, three and a half months later (February 19, 1915), Admiral Carden again bombarded these same forts, the Gallipoli Peninsula was however totally unprepared for defence, and was still weakly occupied, and small parties of Marines were able to make their way unopposed into the shattered forts and a considerable distance beyond them.

Impending Turkish Attack upon Egypt

We had now to provide against the impending Turkish attack upon Egypt.

The First Cruiser Squadron, comprising the *Black Prince*, *Duke of Edinburgh* and *Warrior*, had been either employed on escort duties

at sea or on guard near Alexandria or Port Said. Even before the news of Coronel had reached us, the increasing strain upon our resources had made it necessary to replace these fine ships by older smaller vessels. They were now urgently required to form a combat squadron near the Cap de Verde Islands as part of the second general combination against von Spee. They were also promised to the Commander-in-Chief for the Grand Fleet at the earliest possible moment thereafter. We should have been hard pressed in these circumstances to find a new and satisfactory naval force for the defence of the Canal against the now imminent Turkish attack.

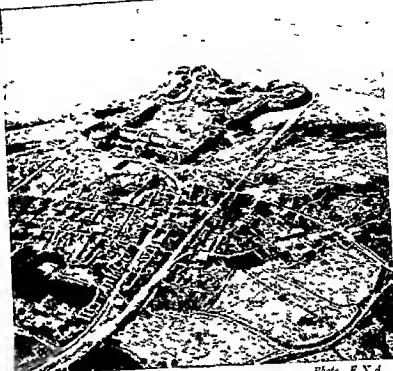


Photo F V D

KUM KALI

An aerial view of the Turkish fort at Kum Kali, one of the fortified points on the shores of the Straits of the Dardanelles.



Photo E N A

KILD BAHR

The noteworthy ace-of-clubs fort of Kild Bahr, which is situated at one of the narrowest points in the Straits opposite to Chanak.



Photo Sport & General

OFFICERS OF THE SERBIAN GENERAL STAFF

When it is considered that Serbia was a small country and according to western standards a poor one the resistance offered to the armies of the Central Powers in 1914 proved military qualities of the highest order. When it is further reflected that the Balkan Wars immediately preceded the Great War itself and that Serbia was engaged therein it may be argued that the leadership and staff work of this little army which enabled it to defend its country with such skill after such a lengthy period of warfare were also upon a high plane.

The discovery and blocking in of the *Königsberg* on October 31 liberated two out of the three vessels searching for her. But this was not enough. The destruction of the *Emden* on November 9 was an event of a very different order. It afforded us immediate relief, and relief exactly where we required it. The Indian Ocean was now clear. The battleship *Swiftsure* from the East Indian station was at once ordered to the Canal. Of the fast cruisers that had been searching for the *Emden*, the *Gloucester*, *Melbourne*, *Sydney*, *Hampshire* and *Yarmouth* were immediately brought homewards through the Red Sea into the Mediterranean. I felt that the Commander-in-Chief in the East Indies must come himself to the new scene of danger

Admiralty, to Commander-in-Chief,
East Indies

November 14, 1914

Naval operations in the Red Sea and Egypt cannot be directed from India. Your presence in Egypt is imperative. You should rejoin your flagship *Swiftsure* at Port Said by the quickest route at once. *Gloucester* can take you if she has not

already sailed. Telegraph what date you expect to arrive at Suez. On arrival you should consult with General Officer Commanding, Egypt, and work hand in hand with him and with the British authorities.

The following ships will be at your disposal in the Red Sea: *Swiftsure*, *Minerva*, *Doris*, *Prosperrine* and eight torpedo-boats from Malta. Measures are also being taken to organize armed launches and improvised gunboats for use in the Canal. Telegraph whether you feel able to discharge the other duties of your command, namely, convoy and Persian Gulf operations, at the same time, or what temporary arrangements you suggest during your absence in Egyptian waters.

Naval Concentration in the Canal—
Repulse of the Turkish Attack

A few days earlier I had minuted —

November 18, 1914

First Sea Lord
Chief of Staff

I cannot agree to this. It would be a great waste of a valuable ship. Considerably more than a week has passed since I minuted that *Askold* should be

ordered to the Mediterranean. There or in Egyptian waters this Russian ship will have a chance of fighting against Turkey. To send her off to Hong-Kong is an altogether purposeless errand. Her stores should go on with the mines or in another vessel which keeps company with the mines from Vladivostok. No convoy is necessary, but if it were, the *Chio* or *Cadmus*, or some little vessel like them, could be used. The whole Japanese Navy is in the Pacific and Indian Oceans. They would quite willingly find a convoy for the mines and the *Askold* stores. The whole area of the sea, from the coast of Chih to the coast of Mozambique, has been cleared of the enemy. But for vague rumours of a possible armed merchantman at large, there is not the slightest menace.

We must profit from this situation to the full while it lasts, and this can only be done by moving every ship that is of any use promptly into waters where they are required. No one knows how many ships we shall want in Egypt when the Turkish invasion begins. There may also be massacres of Christians in the coast towns of Levant which will require vessels for immediate action there. All the ships out of the Indian Ocean that can play an effective part ought to be hurried home. The cruisers ought to steam at least 18 knots. Nearly all these ships have lost three or four precious days since the destruction of the *Emden* was known.

W S C

These directions were complied with

I searched the oceans for every available ship. During the second and third weeks of November the *Swiftsure* and the squadron and flotilla already mentioned, together with the French *Requin* and the Russian *Askold*, entered the Canal for the defence of Egypt. The Turkish attack proved however to be only of a tentative character. Finding themselves confronted with troops and ships, they withdrew after feeble efforts into the eastern deserts to gather further strength.

Arrival of the Australians in Egypt

All this time the great Australasian convoy carrying the Australian and New



Photo Underwood & Underwood

SHAVING IN A FRONT-LINE TRENCH

A simple little scene typical of many witnessed at any time during the years 1914-18 on the Western Front. Actually this photograph was taken in a Serbian front line trench during the early months of the war.

Zealand Army Corps, "A N Z A C," had been steaming steadily towards France across the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Preparations had been made if necessary to divert them to Cape Town. But before the convoy reached Colombo, General Botha and General Smuts had suppressed the rebellion in South Africa. The Australians and New Zealanders therefore continued their voyage to Europe under the escort of the *Ibuki* and the *Hampshire*. By the end of November their transports were entering the Canal. As the Turkish invasion of Egypt was still threatening, the need of resolute and trustworthy troops in Egypt was great, and on the first day of December Lord Kitchener, in the fateful unfolding of events, began to disembark the whole Australian and New Zealand Force at Suez for the double purpose of completing their training and defending the line of the Canal.

* * * *

At this point we may leave the Turkish situation for a time. The German grip was strengthening every day on Turkey. The distresses of her peoples and the improvement of her military organization were advancing together. Under the guns of the *Goeben* and *Breslau*, doubt, division and scarcity, dwelt in Constantinople. Outside the Straits the British squadron maintained its silent watch. Greece, perplexed at the attitude of Britain, distracted by the quarrels of Venizelos and King Constantine, had fallen far from the high resolve of August. Serbia stoutly contended with the Austrian armies. Roumania and Bulgaria brooded on the past and watched each other with intent regard. In Egypt the training of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps perfected itself week by week.

The Prelude to the Dardanelles

Thus, as this act in the stupendous world drama comes to its close, we see already the scene being set and the actors assembling for the next. From the uttermost ends of the earth ships and soldiers are approaching or gathering in the Eastern Mediterranean in fulfilment of a destiny as yet not understood by

mortal man. The clearance of the Germans from the oceans liberated the Fleets, the arrival of the Anzacs in Egypt created the nucleus of the army needed to attack the heart of the Turkish Empire. The deadlock on the Western Front, where all was now frozen into winter trenches, afforded at once a breathing space and large possibility of further troops. While Australian battalions trampled the crisp sand of the Egyptian desert in tireless evolutions, and Commander Holbrook in his valiant submarine dived under the minefields of Chanak and sank a Turkish transport in the throat of the Dardanelles, far away in the basins of Portsmouth the dockyard men were toiling night and day to mount the fifteen-inch guns and turrets of the *Queen Elizabeth*.

As yet all was unconscious, inchoate, purposeless, uncombined. Any one of a score of chances might have given, might still give, an entirely different direction to the event. No plan has been made, no resolve taken. But new ideas are stirring, new possibilities are coming into view, new forces are at hand, and with them there marches towards us a new peril of the first magnitude. Russia, mighty steam-roller, hope of suffering France and prostrate Belgium—Russia is failing. Her armies are grappling with Hindenburg and Ludendorff, and behind their brave battle fronts already the awful signs of weakness, of deficiency, of disorganization, are apparent to anxious Cabinets and Councils. Winter has come and locked all Russia in its grip. No contact with her Allies, no help from them, is possible. The ice blocks the White Sea. The Germans hold the Baltic. The Turks have barred the Dardanelles. It needs but a cry from Russia for help, to make vital what is now void, and to make purposeful what is now meaningless. But as yet no cry has come.

* * * *

General Survey of the War

The reader has now followed through the preceding chapters the steady increase of strain upon Admiralty resources which marked in every theatre the months of September, October and

November, 1914. He must understand that, although for the purposes of the narrative it is necessary to deal in separate chapters with each separate set of strains and crises, many of the events were proceeding simultaneously in all theatres at once, and the consequent strains were cumulative and reciprocally reacting on one another, with the result that during November an extraordinary pitch of intensity was reached which could not well be prolonged and could not possibly have been exceeded.

It is worth while to review the whole situation. First, the transport of troops and supplies to France was unceasing and vital to our Army. On the top of all this came the operations on the Belgian coast, the approach of the enemy to the Channel ports, and the long-drawn crisis of the great battle of Ypres-Yser. Secondly, all the enemy's cruisers were still alive, and a number of hostile armed merchantmen were free in the outer seas, each threatening an indefinite number of points and areas and requiring from five to ten times their numbers to search for them and protect traffic while they were at large. At the same time the great convoys of troops from India, from Canada, from Australia, and the collection of the British regular garrisons from all parts of the world were proceeding, and no less than six separate expeditions, viz. Samoa, New Guinea, German East Africa, Togoland, the Cameroons and German South-West Africa, were in progress or at a critical stage. Upon this was thrust the outbreak of war with Turkey, the attack upon the Suez Canal, and the operations in the Persian Gulf.

The Great Strain—The Sudden Relief

To meet these fierce obligations we had to draw no less than three decisive units from the Grand Fleet. This Fleet, which at the outset of the war was in perfect order, was already requiring refits by rotation, with consequent reduction of available strength. Meanwhile, the submarine menace had declared itself in a serious form, and was moreover exaggerated in our minds. Although the most vehement efforts

were being made to give security to our fleets in their northern harbours, these measures took many weeks during which anxiety was continual. Behind all stood the German Fleet, aware, as we must suppose, of the strain to which we were being subjected, and potentially ready at any moment to challenge the supreme decision. With the long nights of winter, the absence of all regular troops from the country, the then inadequate training of the Territorial Force and the embryonic condition of the new Kitchener armies, the fear of invasion revived, and, although we rejected it in theory, nevertheless we were bound to take in practice a whole series of precautionary measures.

It was a formidable time. More than once the thought occurred that the Admiralty would be forced to contract their responsibilities and abandon to their fate for a time some important interests, in order that those which were vital might be secured. In the event we just got through. It may be claimed that during these months we met every single call that was made upon us, guarded every sea, carried every expedition, brought every convoy safely in, discharged all our obligations both to the Army in France and to the Belgians, and all the time maintained such a disposition of our main forces that we should never have declined battle had the enemy ventured to offer it.

Then suddenly all over the world the tension was relaxed. One after another the German cruisers and commerce destroyers were blocked in or hunted down. The great convoys arrived. The expeditions were safely landed. Ocean after ocean became clear. The boom defences of our harbours were completed. A score of measures for coping with the submarine were set on foot. Large reinforcements of new ships of the highest quality and of every class began to join the Fleet. The attack on the Suez Canal was stemmed. The rebellion in South Africa was quelled. The dangers of invasion, if such there were, diminished every day with the increasing efficiency of the Territorials and the New Armies. The great battle for the Channel ports ended in decisive and ever glorious victory. And finally with the Battle of



THE AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND ARMY

When the A N Z A C's as they came to be called—a name which was to be immortalized at the Suez Canal against Turkish invasion and completing their training. This fine photograph shows shifting sands perfecting their preparations for war week by week. This early experience of them were called upon to ride

the Falkland Islands the clearance of the oceans was complete, and soon, except in the land-locked Baltic and Black Seas and in the defended area of the Heligoland Bight, the German flag had ceased to fly on any vessel in any quarter of the world¹

The End of the Beginning

The mighty enemy, with all the advantages of preparation and design, had delivered his onslaught and had everywhere been brought to a standstill. It was our turn now. The initiative had passed to Britain—the Great Amphibian. The time and the means were at our command. It was for us to say where we would strike and when. The strength of the Grand Fleet was, as we believed, ample, and in addition the whole of those numerous squadrons which hitherto had been spread over the outer seas now formed a surplus fleet capable of intervening in the supreme struggle without in any way compromising the foundation of our naval power.

¹ The *Dresden* and two armed merchant cruisers were alive for a few weeks more but in complete inactivity.

But these realizations were only permissible as the prelude to fresh and still more intense exertions. It would indeed be shameful, so it seemed at least to me, for the Admiralty to rest contented with the accomplishment of the first and most hazardous stage of its task and to relax into a supine contemplation of regained securities and dangers overcome. Now was the time to make our weight tell, perhaps decisively, but certainly most heavily, in the struggle of the armies. Now was the time to fasten an offensive upon the Germans, unexpected and unforeseeable, to present them with a succession of surprising situations leading on from crisis to crisis and from blow to blow till their downfall was achieved.

Moreover, these same Germans were, of all the enemies in the world, the most to be dreaded when pursuing their own plans, the most easily disconcerted when forced to conform to the plans of their antagonist. To leave a German leisure to evolve his vast, patient, accurate designs, to make his slow, thorough, infinitely far-seeing preparations, was to court a terrible danger. To throw him out of his stride, to baffle

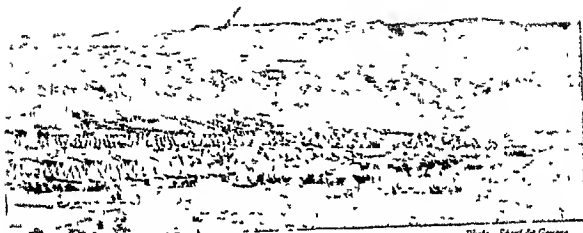


Photo Sport & General

CORPS ENCAMPED NEAR THE PYRAMIDS

Dardanelles—arrived at Suez they were disembarked for the double purpose of guarding their camp hard by the Pyramids. They marched and manœuvred on the stretches of soft desert conditions was destined to stand these fine troops in good stead at a later period when and fight in Syria and Palestine

his studious mind, to break his self-confidence, to cow his spirit, to rupture his schemes by unexpected action, was surely the path not only of glory but of prudence

* * * *

Here then ends the first phase of the naval war. The first part of the British task is done both by land and sea. Paris and the Channel ports are saved, and the oceans are cleared. It is certain that the whole strength of the British Empire can be turned into war power and brought to bear upon the enemy. There is no chance of France being struck down before the British Empire is ready, there is no chance of the British Empire itself being paralysed before its full force can be applied to the struggle. The supreme initiative passes from the Teutonic Powers to the Allies. Resources, almost measureless and of indescribable variety in ships, in men, in munitions and devices of war, will now flow month by month steadily into our hands. What shall we do with them?

Strategic alternatives on the greatest

scale and of the highest order present themselves to our choice. Which shall we choose?

Shall we use our reinforced fleets and great new armies of 1915, either to turn the Teutonic right in the Baltic or their left in the Black Sea and the Balkans? Or shall we hurl our manhood against sandbags, wire and concrete in frontal attack upon the German fortified lines in France? Shall we by a supreme effort make direct contact with our Russian ally or leave her in a dangerous isolation? Shall we by decisive action, in hopes of shortening the conflict, marshal and draw in the small nations in the north and in the south who now stand outside it? Or shall we plod steadily forward at what lies immediately in our front? Shall our armies toil only in the mud of Flanders, or shall we break new ground? Shall our fleets remain contented with the grand and solid results they have won, or shall they ward off future perils by a new inexhaustible audacity?

The answers to these momentous questions will appear as this tale is carried forward to a further stage

CHAPTER XXXII

EAST OR WEST ?

A Breathing-space—The Balkans—Contrasted Fortunes—Supremacy of the Defensive—Tension in Berlin—Italy's War Preparations—Hindenburg's Challenge—The Kaiser's Decision—Berchtold Departs—Germany's First Recovery—The British Standpoint—Deadlock in the West—The Attack on Turkey—Divided Counsels—Lord Kitchener

THE end of the year 1914 and the seventies of winter closed what has been called "The Second Round" of the struggle. In the West after the battle of Ypres, in the East after the battle of Lodz, the fronts became stationary in close contact behind ever-growing entrenchments. Sovereigns, statesmen and commanders on both sides surveyed the ghastly scene, weighed the results of all battles, and set themselves to plan the future.

A Breathing-space

An immense feeling of relief inspired the leaders of the Allies. The terrific onslaught of Germany upon France had failed. Time would now be given for the whole armed strength of the British Empire to be brought to bear. The naval victory of the Falkland Islands had exterminated the German cruiser warfare. The British command alike of the oceans and the narrow seas was absolute. Very large surplus naval forces released from the cruiser warfare came back into the hands of the Admiralty. The blockade of the enemy Empires was complete and its pressures began to grow.

Different indeed were the feelings with which the German Chiefs measured the past and faced the future. They had no illusions upon the results which had so far declared themselves. Although their armies stood almost everywhere on conquered soil and they disposed of enormous and still-growing resources, they cast about earnestly for some means of escape from the deadly toils into which they had incontinently plunged. The causes of British and French satisfaction were perfectly appreciated by them, and

struck a knell in their hearts. To the problems of their Generals the German Chancellor and Foreign Office now made an unwelcome contribution. All hopes of inducing Italy or Roumania to join them had long vanished. On Christmas Day Count Czernin, Austrian Ambassador at Bucharest, had declared to Conrad that Italy and Roumania "would enter the war upon the side of the Entente, unless the Central Empires could achieve a far-reaching victory by the spring." Italy was pressing with increasing plainness and slowly unveiling menace her demands for grievous cessions of Austrian territory. Roumania seemed to be keeping step with Italy, and a hostile declaration by both Powers might well be simultaneous.

The Balkans

It became obvious that the attitude of the Balkan States was of decisive importance. Turkey—the one new adherent—had been defeated in the Caucasus, and was already in internal stress. No military communication existed between her and the Central Powers. Serbia had not been defeated, on the contrary, she was triumphant, Bulgaria had not been won over, Greece was adverse, and Roumania refused to allow the transport of munitions to Turkey. Already on December 14 General von der Goltz had written from Constantinople to Falkenhayn that the decision of the whole war rested with the small Balkan powers. Their by no means negligible forces and influence might turn the scale either way. It was evident to the German Foreign Office that the whole of the Balkan States and Italy might come into the

war against the Teutonic and Turkish Empires. This would involve the speedy collapse of Austria-Hungary, the destruction of Turkey, and the final fatal isolation of Germany. All this pointed to the strongest action against Russia, to the imperative upholding of Austria, and to opening direct access to Turkey. To the east must the Germans go. Conrad on December 27 telegraphed to Falkenhayn:

"Complete success in the Eastern theatre is still, as hitherto, decisive for the general situation and extremely urgent. Rapid decision and rapid execution are absolutely necessary if the intervention of neutrals which is certainly to be expected at the latest at the beginning of March, is to be forestalled."

Contrasted Fortunes

He reinforced these claims by arguments of their own, and here we must note a real and only partly unconscious cleavage of interest and opinion which opened in the German supreme war control. The German generals who had fought in the west had, since the French had turned at the Marne and begun to use their artillery and rifles, met with no success, and in war which is always unfair, lack of success is serious. They had been unpleasantly surprised by the obstinacy of the French in defence. They had not believed them capable of such unsensational stubbornness. They were even more astonished by being forced to take the British Army seriously. They now realized that they were in the west confronted by troops and military organizations of the highest order.

The German generals in the east, on the other hand, had gained splendid victories. There were no trench lines, no high-calibre rifles, few machine guns and only a comparatively weak artillery. There was the opportunity for manoeuvre, and for that large kind of tactics or battlefield strategy which manifests itself through the adroit use of a superior railway system. In the east great victories had been won, with hundreds of thousands of captives, and whole hostile armies destroyed, as the result of what were undoubtedly finely-conceived manoeuvres modelled upon the classics of war. All

Germany shone with the glory of Tannenberg.

The Supreme Command which had been thankful to see the failure of the Marne thus marked now found with some disquietude that they cut a less impressive figure in the national eye than the triumphant warriors of the east. Hindenburg and Ludendorff, about to appoint themselves with decorum met in conferences men who stood by in a superior station bore the taint of failure. But the Supreme Command with its galaxy of Generals and Staff Officers albeit discomfited still upheld all the machinery of the German Army and five-sixths of its strength. Patriotism, public service, military discipline, personal courtesy, spirit of sacrifice nobility were all there. Still the underlying facts remained, and the East said in unspoken words: "Why don't you let us go on winning the war for you?" and the West replied by thunderous loud: "Win the war! Why, you have only been collecting Russian!"

Supremacy of the Defence

Even now the German Supreme Command had not divined the real fact that they were in presence of an enormous inherent superiority of the defence. At this time in the west, that is to say, between armies of equal quality and in a theatre with closed flanks, the offensive could make no headway. Once the war subsided into the trench line and barbed wire, the advantage of the defenders was overwhelming. The attacking troops had not got at this time the weight of artillery necessary to pulverize the trenches. Still less had they the volume of artillery capable of hitting the whole front, so that an attack on a great scale could be launched on any one of three or four different sectors. The offensive therefore could not require the virtue of surprise. They had no tanks to crush down the barbed wire. They had not yet developed poison-gas. Even the creeping barrage was unknown. In short, the offensive possessed none of the processes or apparatus capable of making headway against a continuous line of bravely-defended trenches supported by the ordinary artillery of a

field army, reinforced by many fortress guns. Falkenhayn did not understand this, nor did Joffre, nor did French, nor Foch, nor apparently any of the high military officers on either side. But it remained for several years the dominant fact in the western theatre. With the armies matched as they were, no means of advance was open.

Falkenhayn throughout took the conventional military view, and adhered to it with perseverance. He did not believe that any manoeuvres in the east would end the war. He had already reached the conclusion that so long as France, Russia and Great Britain held together, it was impossible to beat them sufficiently

to attain a "decent" victory, and Germany would run the danger of being exhausted. At this moment he sought nothing from Russia or France but an indemnity. He was no longer fighting for victory, but only for honourable escape. If, in order to find peace, Germany had to continue the war, the best chance was to press the struggle in the west. He was already busy planning a renewed offensive mainly against the British. Four new army corps would soon be ready in Germany. In January, or at the latest in February, his whole available force would be hurled upon the northern sectors of the Anglo-French lines.

He met him four-square in opposition. They were sure that the war could be won and ought to be won by making great efforts in the east, and that unless these efforts were made, it would be speedily and irretrievably lost by the apparition in the field of the armies of a Balkan block, and a separate peace by Austria. Conrad and the Austrian Headquarters reiterated these views with desperate energy. And now all the forces of high politics and diplomacy ranged themselves upon the eastern side of the argument. The Chancellor

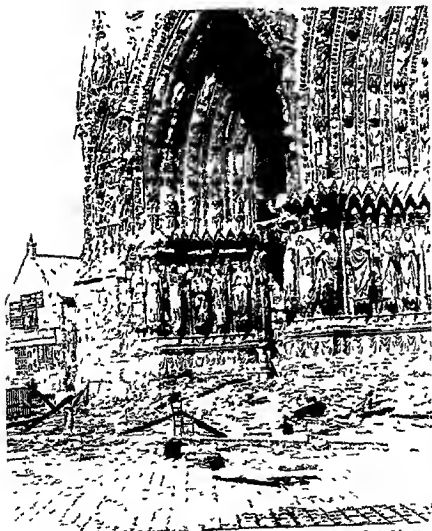


Photo Central News

RHEIMS CATHEDRAL. DAMAGE TO NORTH WEST PORTAL.

The cathedral at Rheims which has been described as "perhaps the most beautiful structure produced in the Middle Ages," suffered severely in 1914 at the hands of the German artillery. As this picture shows, the exquisite stone figures, carving and gargoyles were broken or completely shot away. The stained glass was shattered and the beautiful interior almost completely destroyed.

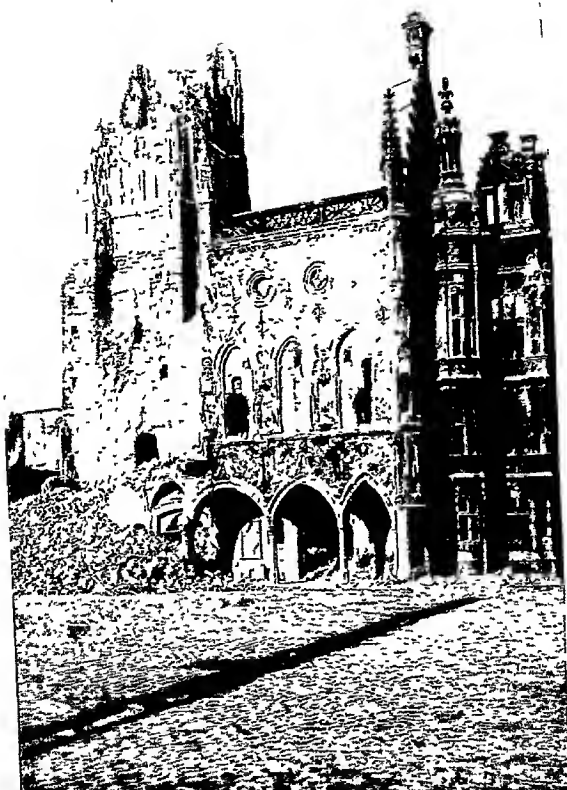


Photo Copyright

ARRAS THE HOTEL DE VILLE OCTOBER, 1914

As was the case at Rheims the ancient town of Arras suffered severely during the early months of the war. Towards the end of the campaign Arras was little but a collection of ruined or badly damaged buildings. Even in October 1914, the sixteenth-century Hotel de Ville, with its fine belfry, had been reduced to the wreck shown above. The belfry received twenty-four direct hits from heavy shells.

and the German Foreign Office, rightly terrified at the prospect of Italy and a Balkan block being added to the hostile coalition, joined themselves to the victors of Tannenberg—the Great Twin Brethren of the East. “The West has failed. The Schlieffen plan is burnt out. Smash Russia. Hold Austria up. Crush Serbia. Rally the Balkans and join hands with Turkey.” Thus arose a grim trial of strength between personages and policies of the highest consequence.

Tension in Berlin

On New Year's Day Falkenhayn and Conrad met in Berlin. Ludendorff, representing Hindenburg, was also present. Intense discussions occupied the day. The conflict of wills and opinions rendered the conference abortive. Writing of it in after years, Ludendorff says that he received no clear answer and in effect that Falkenhayn adopted dilatory tactics towards Conrad's demands. “It was all unsatisfactory and unmeaning. It was a contest of opinions settled beforehand.” On January 2 Falkenhayn confirmed his decision. He telegraphed to Conrad, who had returned to Teschen, that the Kaiser agreed that troops could not at present be moved from the western to the eastern theatre. It would be time enough to settle the destination of the new troops now being raised in Germany in three weeks. And the next day he informed Hindenburg that to earmark the new formations for the east would be “equivalent to renouncing all activity in the West for as long as could be forecasted, with all the serious consequences which that would entail, and these must not be lost sight of there.” Hindenburg thereupon took counsel with the Chancellor, and the latter, deeply impressed, proposed to the Kaiser Falkenhayn's removal from the Supreme Command.

Italy's War Preparations

On January 4 Conrad received a report from his military attache in Rome that Italy was making all preparations to enter the war against the Central Powers, that the Italian army would be ready at the end of January and fully ready by the end of March. Berchtold, from Vienna, emphasized this formidable news

and urged a speedy victory in the Carpathians as the only means of averting the peril. On this Conrad ordered the preparation of an offensive in Galicia and telegraphed both to the Supreme Command and to H. for the aid of four or five German divisions.

Falkenhayn refused. He would not send troops from the west to the east, nor was he even willing that Hindenburg should send German troops from his own army to aid in an offensive in the Carpathians. If any troops were sent from the Ninth Army they should go to Serbia, rather than the Carpathians. “Roumania's attitude, Bulgaria's possible accession and the extraordinarily important question of establishing communications with Turkey, are exclusively dependent on the situation in Serbia.” He added pointedly that “in the view of German diplomacy, Italy could only be kept quiet by satisfying her wishes as soon as possible and not by driving the Russians out of the Carpathians.” To this Conrad retorted that the satisfaction of Italy was not to be thought of, and would it not be better for Germany to satisfy France (presumably in Alsace-Lorraine) “and thus break up the Entente?” On this H. struck a decisive blow. They informed Berlin that they were in full accord with Conrad, and that they had already without consulting Falkenhayn promised to send several divisions to his aid. This independent action was a challenge of the first order to Falkenhayn's authority.

Hindenburg's Challenge

Both parties now clutched at the Kaiser. Hitherto he had stood by his new Chief of the Staff who was still also Minister of War, but the pressure had now become irresistible. The dismissal of Hindenburg and Ludendorff was impossible. All Germany would stand behind them. On January 8 the Kaiser decided in favour of Conrad's Carpathian plans, and ordered the formation of a German Southern Army, the “Südarmee,” under Linsingen. Falkenhayn, compelled to submit, was nevertheless strong enough to exact an important condition. He did not intend to be further surprised and defied by the Hindenburg-

Ludendorff combination. He was resolved to break up the tremendous partnership which had already altered the centre of gravity of the German war control. He therefore obtained the Kaiser's assent to Ludendorff's appointment as Chief of the Staff to Linsingen. This invidious act was wrapt in a flattering reference to the Kaiser's special confidence in Ludendorff, but the motive was obvious. Hindenburg, deeply aggrieved, reported on January 9 directly to the Kaiser, saying that the success which he now expected in the Carpathians would be by no means an adequate cure for the difficulties of Austria.

"It must be combined with a decisive blow in East Prussia. Four new Army Corps will be ready at the beginning of February. The employment of these in the East is a necessity. With them it will not be difficult quickly to inflict on the enemy in East Prussia a decisive and annihilating blow and at last to free entirely that sorely afflicted province and to push on thence with our full force to Białystok. I regard this operation, with the employment in the East of the newly-raised forces, as decisive for the outcome of the whole war, whereas their employment in the West will only lead to a strengthening of our defence, or—as at Ypres—to a costly and not very promising frontal push. Our army in the West ought to be able to hold well-constructed positions sited in successive lines and to maintain itself without being reinforced by the new Corps until the decisive success in the East has been attained."

He concluded with an impassioned appeal for the return of Ludendorff.

"Your Imperial and Royal Majesty has been graciously pleased to command that General Ludendorff should, as Chief of the General Staff, be transferred from me to the Southern Army. During the days of Tannenberg and the Masurian Lakes, during the operations against Ivangorod and Warsaw, and in the advance from the Wreschen-Thorn line, I have grown into close union with my Chief of Staff, he has become to me a true helper and friend, irreplaceable by any other, one on whom I bestow my

fullest confidence. Your Majesty knows from the history of war how important so happy a relationship is for the course of affairs and the well-being of the troops. To that is to be added that his new and so much smaller sphere of action does not do justice to the General's comprehensive ability and great capacity.

On all these grounds I venture most respectfully to beg that my war-comrade may graciously be restored to me so soon as the operations in the South are under way. It is no personal ambition which leads me to lay this petition at the feet of Your Imperial and Royal Majesty. That lies far from me! Your Majesty has overwhelmed me with favour beyond my deserts, and after the war is ended I shall retire again into the background with a thankful and joyful heart. Far rather do I believe that I am fulfilling a duty in expressing with all submission this request."

The Kaiser's Decision

Meanwhile Falkenhayn had decided to attempt a personal settlement. On January 11 he reached Breslau and there met Conrad, Linsingen and Ludendorff. On the 12th he was at Posen and faced Hindenburg supported by Ludendorff and Hoffmann. These discussions only aggravated the existing differences, and an intense personal and technical crisis arose in Berlin. All centred upon the Kaiser. Hindenburg now openly joined the Chancellor in demanding the dismissal of Falkenhayn, the employment of the four corps in the east, and the reunion of Ludendorff and Hindenburg. The Kaiser, by the German Constitution Supreme War Lord, had to choose. He did not on this occasion fail the German people. He decided against Falkenhayn. The four corps were ordered to the east. Ludendorff, after organizing the "Sud-armee," was to be returned to Hindenburg, and Falkenhayn was forced to resign the Ministry of War.

In spite of these wounding blows, Falkenhayn was found still willing "with a heavy heart" to remain Chief of the Staff of the Armies. Thus smitten in the foundations of his power he nevertheless continued in the highest military office for nearly two



A DIRECT HIT

Photo Copyright

This remarkable photograph taken at the moment of the impact of a heavy shell upon a building in Dixmude, conveys some idea of the damage even one modern high-explosive shell is capable of producing. Two or three more direct hits on this building would be sufficient to level it to the ground.

years. He nursed for a time the idea that he himself might take command of the eastern operations. Rebuffed again in this, he contented himself with a scathing commentary upon them. He doubted altogether "the possibility of bringing to a combined result two decisive undertakings separated by a thinly-held gap of over 600 kilometres for which only limited forces were available." He anticipated no more than "fairly large local successes" in the Carpathians and in East Prussia. In this he was to be vindicated by the event. His authority had however received a mutilating blow,

and henceforth there were two rival centres of power in the German army.

* * *

Berchtold Departs

The severity of the war had already worn down the frail personality of Berchtold. The failure of Potiorek in Serbia had deprived him even of that local satisfaction he had purchased so dearly. The prospect of Italy joining the foes of Austria and adding a new front to the task of her crumbling armies was a strain beyond his nerve to bear. He who had been so rash and resolute in the crisis was the first to falter in the struggle. Tisza, on the other hand, who had pleaded for caution and peace while time remained, now showed the stern strength of his character. Undismayed by events, he strove to infuse resource and energy into the leadership of the Empire. He resolved that Berchtold should

give place to a more determined figure.

The change was effected with an ease and politeness, with an absence of irritation or excitement thoroughly typical of the diplomatic circle in Vienna. On January 11 Tisza and Tschirschky lunched with Berchtold. The German Ambassador as usual pressed, and this time with harshness, that Austria should buy off Italy at all costs with territorial concessions. Tisza made it plain that this could not be done. After a long discussion between the three Tisza found himself alone with Berchtold for a few minutes before his audience with the Emperor.

"I told him," he records, "that I should be obliged to say to His Majesty that at the present moment I considered that the post of Foreign Minister should be occupied by a man of greater decision, who followed out his own policy with more consequence and energy" Berchtold replied smiling, as was his custom, like a good child "I shall be very thankful if you really do say it, for I am always saying it, but he won't believe me He will believe you" Not disarmed by this engaging demeanour, Tisza repaired forthwith to the palace and proposed Berchtold's immediate dismissal to the Emperor Francis Joseph did not demur He had often, he remarked, thought the same thing After Tisza had explained that he himself could not leave his post as Hungarian Minister and President, it was arranged that a man of the bureau,

a protégé of Tisza's, Baron Burian, should take charge of the foreign policy of the Empire On January 13 Berchtold quitted the Ballplatz, and retired tranquilly to his estates, where he resides to this day "Leave me in peace," he protested naively in 1916 to a friend, "I got sick of the war long ago"

* * * *

Germany's First Recovery

We have witnessed the birth convulsions of the German plans for 1915 We shall presently follow their varied fortunes in the field No one can now doubt that the decision wrung from the Kaiser, for which he deserves due credit, was right The year that opened so darkly for Germany was to be for her the most prosperous of the war In Artois and Champagne the French, at



NIEUPORT IN 1914

Photo Farrington Photo Co

Here again in Nieuport, is evidence of the effectiveness of the German artillery. Even after a few weeks of war scores of towns and villages in France and Flanders which but a few weeks before had been prosperous and secure, were laid in ruins. Later on the Somme in 1916 many of the villages in that stricken region were shelled until nothing remained to indicate where once they had stood

Neuve Chapelle and Loos the British, were doomed to wear themselves out upon the barbed wire and machine-guns of the German defence. With the loss of all her fortresses Russia was to be driven out of Poland and Galicia. Bulgaria was gained as an ally by the Central Powers, Serbia was invaded and for a space annihilated, Greece was distracted and paralysed. While Romania was awed into a continuing neutrality and Italy was left to break her teeth on the Isonzo, the German road to Constantinople was opened and Turkey, saved from destruction, fought on reinvigorated. To observe the other side of these surprising transformations and mighty achievements we must now repair to London.

The attention of France was riveted upon the Invasion. All French energies and thought were absorbed in the life-and-death struggle which for the moment had slackened, but must soon be renewed. Joffre, victor of the Marne, and his Grand-Quartier-Général, G. Q. G., dominated the scene. France was hardly conscious of other scenes. Russia, Austria and the Balkans, all these were noticed only as a swordsman in the climax of a duel observes his seconds or the spectators. To strengthen the French army, to hold the front in France, to liberate the thirteen conquered departments from a hateful yoke—these were the war-plans of France. But in London, where the pressures were not so severe, a more general view was possible. A small group of men at or near the summit of the war-direction had been for some weeks gazing intently upon that same Eastern Front which was the subject of these lively discussions in Berlin.

The British Standpoint

The reader with all the facts laid bare before him must also realize how difficult it was in the Cabinet or at the Admiralty and War Office to learn and measure the facts and values of the episodes which have already been recorded. We had been absorbed in securing the command of the seas, in sending the British army to France and keeping it alive under the terrible hammer-blows which it endured, in gathering together the

forces of the Empire, and in mobilizing for the struggle all the wealth, influence and manhood—not inconsiderable in any quarter of the globe—on which His Britannic Majesty could make a claim.

The French told us little except their wishes, and the Russians less. We had sustained generally the impression that Russia had defeated Austria in a great battle called Lemberg, and that Germany had successfully defended East Prussia. We had the feeling that the Russian "steam-roller" which the Western Powers had expected would smooth the path to victory, was moving backwards as well as forwards, as is indeed the habit of steam-rollers. But the full significance of Tannenberg was only gradually understood. Like the French, we were in contact with immeasurable events and occupied from hour to hour with vital details. Masses of information were provided in the Intelligence reports. Every day there lay upon my table twenty or thirty fumes recording the ceaseless movement of troops to and fro across Europe and every kind of rumour true or false. From the Admiralty we asked the War Office repeatedly for general appreciations. But all the British General Staff had gone to the war, and had been entirely preoccupied ever since in keeping together the body and soul of the Expeditionary Army. No adequate machine existed for sifting, clarifying and focussing the multitudinous reports. Lord Kitchener, calm, Olympian, secretive and imperfectly informed, endeavoured in these months to discharge in his own person the functions of Secretary of State for War, Commander-in-Chief and of the collective intelligence of a General Staff.

Deadlock in the West

Yet somehow things had not gone wrong. The seas were clear, the island was safe, the army had reached its battle station, the front was held, the Empire was forming in the fighting line. Therefore there was not at this juncture any very decided questioning of our impressions acquired from day to day, nor of our primitive methods of war-control. Indeed, up to the end of 1914, we were, I feel, entitled to be proud of

our conduct of the war. All our ships and men were being used to the full and in the right way.

No more elaborate organization would up to this point have produced better results. But a change had now come over the war. Its scale and complications grew ceaselessly, and we now had broadening surpluses of men and ships to employ. Here was the question which demanded scientific study.

Once we felt supreme and safe at sea, we looked almost instinctively to Turkey, Russia and the Balkans. During the whole of December Colonel Hankey, Mr Lloyd George and I, working at first independently, became increasingly interested in the south-east of Europe. After war had been declared, diplomacy counted little with neutrals. They were no longer concerned with what was said or promised. The questions they asked themselves were, 'What was going to happen, and who was going to win?' They were not prepared to accept British assurances upon either point. We were astonished to find that many of these neutrals seemed to doubt that Great Britain would certainly be victorious. One pitied their obliquity. But they persisted in it. The Foreign Office talked well, but it was like talking to the void.

However, by the first week in December, we three all separately reached the conclusions that the Western Front had frozen into a deadlock, that whoever attacked would get the worst of it, and that a great diversion or turning movement, diplomatic, naval and military, should be made through and upon the Mediterranean Powers. Little did we know how closely our thoughts corresponded to the preoccupations of Berlin or to the conclusions of El. Behind the hostile fronts all was mystery. Behind the allied fronts, concerted action or machinery for such action was as yet in its infancy. On December 29 I wrote to the Prime Minister as follows:

"I think it quite possible that neither side will have the strength to penetrate the other's lines in the Western theatre. Belgium particularly, which it is vital for Germany to hold as a peace-counter, has no doubt been made into a mere

succession of fortified lines. I think it probable that the Germans hold back several large mobile reserves of their best troops. Without attempting to take a final view, my impression is that the position of both armies is not likely to undergo any decisive change."

The Attack on Turkey

On January 1 the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr Lloyd George, circulated to the War Committee a paper drawing attention to the unfounded optimism which prevailed about the war, to the increasing failure of Russia as a prime factor, and to the need for action in the Balkan Peninsula, in order to rally Greece and Bulgaria to the cause of the Allies. On the same day Colonel Hankey circulated a masterly paper pointing to the Near East as the decisive theatre for our immediate allied action.

These documents had been shown to me some days earlier, and on December 31 I wrote to the Prime Minister, Mr Asquith, about them saying, "We are substantially in agreement and our conclusions are not incompatible. I wanted Gallipoli attacked on the Turkish declaration of war. Meanwhile the difficulties have increased." On January 3, after continuous daily discussions at the Admiralty and with the Prime Minister, Lord Fisher wrote me a letter in which he declared, "I consider the attack on Turkey holds the field—but only if it's immediate!"

There is no doubt that had we known, as we know now, the nature of the discussions proceeding in Berlin, some plan of this kind could and would have been converted into coherent action. We had among ourselves divined the secret of success. Could we have obtained one commanding decision on the fundamental issue, and had there been a proper staff-machine to translate it into plans, it is certain that we could have intervened in the Eastern Mediterranean long before the Germans could have brought their forces to bear.

Divided Counsels

Sir Edward Grey argues in his book that the Germans were on interior lines

and could thus frustrate all diversions. But this was not true of Turkey in this period of the war. On the contrary, its untruth was the key to all the German perturbation. They could not ask Turkey for many months. Amphibious power could strike Turkey in a few weeks.

Our war-direction was not however upon that level. We have seen what struggles were called for from H— supported though they were by Conrad, by the whole influence of Austria and by the German Chancellor—to procure the transference of the war effort to the east,

and only with what compromises they had succeeded. For all the power of the Admiralty we could only use arguments. We could not display the laurels of a naval Tannenberg. There was no supreme authority in London as in Berlin, to say Aye or No, right or left, west or east. It was only one man's opinion against another's. Still, from this moment the politicians on the War Council looked mainly to the east, while Sir John French and the British Army Headquarters fought desperately and naturally to have every man, gun and shell in France.

Lord Kitchener with ever-changing mind was the battle-ground of these contentions. Sometimes one side prevailed with him and then again the other. There can be no doubt that if the "Easterners" had only had to deal with the British army and its Headquarters staff, we could have given them orders. But behind Sir John French and Sir Henry Wilson towered the mighty authority of General Joffre, victor of the Marne.

Lord Kitchener

Joffre, like Falkenhayn, looked only to the Western Front, and like Falkenhayn believed in the superiority of the attack. There alone, in his judgment as in that of his opponent, lay in 1915 the decision of the war. Each was sure that he had only to gather a few more army corps and a few more cannon to break the opposing line and march triumphantly, as the case might be, to Paris or the Rhine. They were of course, as we now know, absolutely out of touch with the true facts and values. Neither of them, nor their expert advisers,

WHO'S ABSENT?



Is it You?

Photo Imperial War Museum

WHO'S ABSENT?

As the war progressed and the need for men and more men became every day more pressing, the hoardings of Britain were plastered with pictorial appeals to the patriotism of those who, for one reason or another still hesitated. The above is a good example from the collection in the Imperial War Museum.

had ever sufficiently realized the blunt truth—quite obvious to common soldiers—that bullets kill men

Against such an incubus we could make no headway. Every time Lord Kitchener was persuaded to the east—where indeed his instincts led him—and measures were taken in that direction, Joffre (with the French government working collaterally through the Foreign Office) descended upon him, so that he swung to and fro like a buoy in a tide-stream. Lots of people would no doubt have done the same.

It must also be remembered that the British Empire was only at this time a subsidiary factor in the land war.

France had ceded to us the decisive control of naval affairs, and some declared that it was our duty after expressing our views to conform to the military guidance of the chiefs of the great and heroic army at whose side our



Reproduced by permission of the London Electric Railways

THE ONLY ROAD FOR AN ENGLISHMAN

Another type of recruiting poster. This fine piece of work by G. Spencer Fryse, is full of dignity and appeal. Issued by the London Electric Railways during the recruiting campaign of 1914-15 it was one of the most remarkable posters in use during the war.

forces—only as yet a tenth as strong—were contending. As Lord Kitchener observed after one heart-shaking discussion: 'We cannot make war as we ought, we can only make it we can.'

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE WINTER BATTLE

H.L.'s Plans for the East—The Russian Strength and Weakness—"The Crab"—An Improvident Disclosure—The Pincers Move—The Tenth Army Wheel—The German Progress—The Russian XXth Corps—Results of the Battle—The Fall of Przemyśl—Falkenhayn's Prediction Fulfilled

HINDENBURG had gained his way over Falkenhayn. He had now to make good against the Russians.

H.L.'s Plans for the East

No doubt in the course of the controversy which the last chapter has described both he and Ludendorff had been led to paint the successes which would reward their plans in glowing colours. All the German and Austrian armies on the Eastern Front were to join in an immense double offensive in East Prussia and far off in the Carpathians against the Grand Duke's northern and southern flanks. The Russian armies were to be seized, as it were, by a crab of monstrous size and gripped simultaneously with each of its two widely-spread claws.

Falkenhayn had acidly pointed out that the two flanking attacks separated by 600 kilometres could not be brought into any effective relation. **H.L.** were under no delusions. The operations on which they had set their hearts lay in the north. Reinforced by the four corps wrested from the Supreme Command, they now controlled three armies: their original Eighth, the Ninth with which they had made their two unsuccessful thrusts at Warsaw, and the three new corps now uniting as a Tenth Army under the command of General von Eichhorn.

Their Eighth and Ninth Armies stood, at the end of January, along lines drawn after the battle of Lodz had ended in mid-December. The front of the Ninth Army running north and south faced Warsaw at about forty miles' distance. The Eighth Army crouched behind the course of the Angerapp stream and the now frozen lakes. The interval of nearly 200 kilometres between them was filled

by Landwehr and Landsturm troops, including Zastrow's corps, gathered at a second gleanings from the various German fortresses. **H.L.** now proposed to use all these forces in combination.

The Russian Strength and Weakness

From what they had learned through the Russian wireless and other sources they credited the Grand Duke with "a gigantic plan" of his own. They believed that as soon as the winter relented he would strike at East Prussia by an upward drive towards Thorn and simultaneously in the north from the direction of Kovno. They intended to forestall him. The Russian armies were in no lack of men. Limitless supplies of obedient peasants were training behind the Czar's frontiers, and as soon as uniforms, equipment and ammunition could be provided, refilled the shattered formations or added to their numbers.

It was not men that Russia lacked, they were in fact the only resources she possessed in superfluity. Her armies filled their immense front, and on paper presented totals larger than ever before. But trained officers and educated non-commissioned officers and clerks of every kind were far below the proportions required to handle such masses of soldiery. Moreover, not only cannon of every calibre and ammunition of every kind, but even rifles were hideously deficient.

Although the Grand Duke, Ruzski and Ivanov still nourished offensive schemes, they were painfully conscious that the aggressive power of Russia had gravely declined since the early battles of the war. Ivanov, who already held the passes of the Carpa-

thians, pressed the Stavka in long personal interviews to reinforce him for an invasion of the plans of Hungary Ruzski, to whose opinion the Grand Duke leaned, preferred to renew the advance through Poland westward and north-westward towards the German frontier. All these discussions were abruptly terminated by German action.

"The Crab"

According to the plan of H.L., the left claw of what I have called the "Crab," was to reach suddenly forward through the Angerapp-Lötzen-Lakes line to seize and destroy all the Russians within its grasp. For this purpose the Ninth Army would move a part of its forces, mostly from the XXth Corps, northwards from the level of Warsaw to the neighbourhood of Ortelshurg and the fields where Tannenberg had been gained, while the three corps forming the new Tenth Army would range themselves in the north in front of Insterburg. On the prescribed date the right of the Eighth Army would strike through Johannishurg towards Lyck, while the Tenth Army would march first north-east, towards Tilsit, then turning continually southwards, through Gumhinnen and Stallupönen towards Grodno. Both these movements as they developed would expose their outer flanks to Russian attacks, in the north from Kovno and the line of the Niemen, and in the south from the line of the Bobr, a tributary of the Narev. Not much danger was apprehended for the strong Tenth Army, but the German forces advancing south of the Lakes would be liable to heavy attacks on their right and right rear, and it was to protect them from this that the Ninth Army troops had been brought to the scene.

An Improvident Disclosure

To mask the northward movement of these Ninth Army troops a sensational attack was made by the rest of the Ninth Army at Bolimov on January 31. A feature of this battle, intended to be much talked-of, was the first employment of 18,000 poison-gas shells. The greatest interest was taken in this improvident disclosure of a terrible secret.



"THE CRAB"

H.L.'s strategic idea for their further operations against the Russians at the beginning of 1915 is broadly shown in the above sketch map. The force at H.L.'s disposal now consists of three armies, the original Eighth, the Ninth and the Tenth, the latter composed of three of the four corps brought from the Western Front. The black arrows indicate the lines upon which the new advance is to be made. The German plan is to outflank and then encircle the Russian force opposing their centre.

Hoffmann betook himself to the church steeple of Bolimov in order to witness the wholesale stuffing of the Russians which the chemists had claimed would follow.



COSSACKS OF THE RUSSIAN ARMY CHARGING THE GERMAN

This spirited drawing by F. Matina was based upon an account supplied to him by the English the Death's Head Hussars were protecting the German left when they were suddenly called upon and after a brief but desperate encounter



DEATH'S HEAD HUSSARS AN EPISODE ON THE EASTERN FRONT

Drawing F. Matan

manager of an estate in East Prussia who was an eye witness of the incident. On this occasion to defend themselves against the Cossack cavalry. The Cossacks swept down upon the Germans, the Hussars were forced to retire.

He described the results as disappointing. The number of shells then thought magnificent was petty compared to later periods, and the intense cold robbed the poison gases of their expected diffusive power. Still on January 31 what the Kaiser afterwards decided to call "the Winter battle in Masuria" was, in fact, begun by this fierce demonstration towards Warsaw.

It served its strategic purpose well. The Russian attention was violently drawn to this point, and they remained unconscious of the northward movement of troops from the Ninth Army. Even more remarkable is it that no inkling came to the Stavka of the deployment and assembly in East Prussia of the four new army corps. They were all in their positions, three to the north and one to the south of the Lake line, in the early days of February, without any warning having reached their prey. Indeed the idea that any great operations could begin in such fearful wintry weather was scouted by the Russians' experience of their own climate. During February 5 and 6 tremendous snowstorms and blizzards lashed East Prussia. The cold

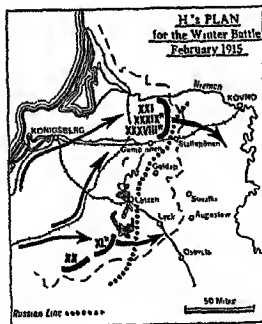
was intense and the snow "metre-deep," or whirled into frozen drifts and hummocks. Even the stubborn wills of the hesitated before launching their hardy troops into the storm. But they steelled their hearts.

The Pincers Move

The immediate object of their design was the Tenth Russian Army, which sat in its trenches from Goldap to Johannishurg in front of the Angerapp-Lake line. They and their commander, General Sievers, suspected nothing of what was passing behind the shield of German fortifications. They passed the 6th and 7th in shovelling the snow out of their trenches. The right pincer of the German crab-claw began to move on the 7th. General Litzmann with the XLth Reserve Corps and the 2nd Division struck from Johannishurg towards Lyck. On the 8th the left pincer, the whole of the German Tenth Army, attacked between the Gumbinnen-Königsberg railway and the Memel river.

The Tenth Army Wheel

The three corps of this army (XXIst, XXXIXth Reserve and XXXVIIIth Reserve from north to south) drove the Russian covering troops before them and began immediately to turn the right and menace the Russian retreat. The enormous difficulties of the weather did not prevent the steady progress of the German Army. It continued to extend its enveloping movement around the Russian right, wheeling continually to the southward. On the night of the 9th-10th the XXIst Corps, after an uninterrupted march of twenty-nine hours, had reached Schirwindt and Vladislavov. The centre corps had passed Pilkallen and the army front faced almost south at right-angles to the original Russian position. On the 10th the XXIst Corps reached Vilkovski, cutting the railway to Kovno, and the XXXIXth Reserve Corps in the centre reached Wirballen, where an entire Russian division which was in reserve was surprised and destroyed with a loss of 10,000 prisoners and six guns. Thus the line of retreat of the whole of the Russian right upon Kovno was severed. Vigor-



H's PLAN

Here is seen in greater detail H's plan for that which the Kaiser was later to describe as the Winter Battle in Masuria. To the north the Tenth Army is in position ready for its southward wheel, whilst the Eighth Army to the south of the Masurian Lakes is preparing to strike towards Lyck.

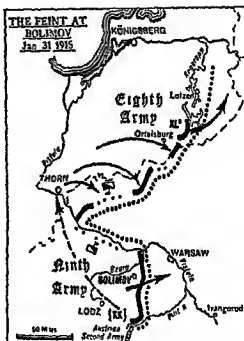
ous attacks by Russian dismounted cavalry from Kovno upon the left and rear of the XXIst Corps were beaten off, but the threat from Kovno was considered sufficient to require the movement of a Landwehr division from the German right to ward off such interference

On the 12th the German Tenth Army front ran from Mariampol and Kalvaria to the neighbourhood of Goldap, and the Russian centre began to be seriously threatened. Indeed, there were now left but two lines of retreat for the whole of General Sievers' army: the first towards the Niemen through Ohta and the second through the Forest of Augustow.

Meanwhile in the south the XLth Reserve Corps was moving on Lyck to cut the Augustow road. Here they encountered tenacious Russian resistance. The road and railway junctions of Lyck were now vital. Bitter fighting with repeated Russian counter-attacks continued in this area in the most severe weather during the whole of the 12th. Valiantly the Russians continued to defend themselves. The German southern force, unable to make progress frontally, extended its right towards Grajevo. Meanwhile the whole front of the Eighth Army had broken out from behind the Angerapp position, and now fell upon the Russians in front of them. By the evening of the 13th they were close to Margrabova—Sievers' old headquarters—and Suwalki. On this day the defenders of Lyck, with both their flanks turned and their rear menaced, withdrew in good order from the positions they had so bravely held. The Germans entered Lyck on the 14th, capturing 5,000 prisoners in the town. The Kaiser, closely following up the advance, visited the town that day and congratulated his victorious troops.

The German Progress

The pincers were closing fast upon the Russian Tenth Army. From the moment when these two great movements upon his flanks were revealed, General Sievers thought only of retreat. Burning villages behind them, but leaving nevertheless vast quantities of stores and provisions,

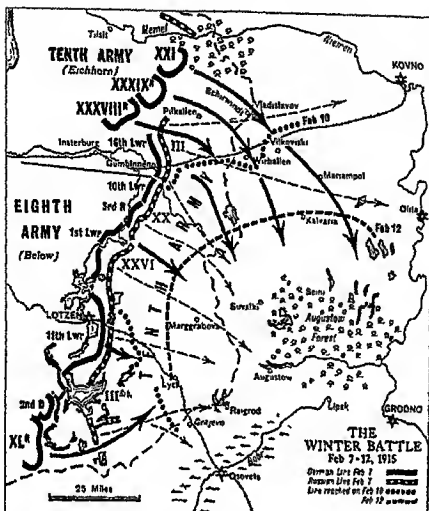


THE FEINT AT BOLIMOV

In order to provide covering troops as a protective force for the right and right-rear of the Eighth Army HL moved the XXIst Corps of the Ninth Army northwards. And at the same time in order to mask this manoeuvre, the rest of the Ninth Army, on January 31, attacked towards Warsaw. On the occasion of this demonstration gas-shells were employed for the first time.

over 350,000 Russians marched eastward as fast as possible. The roads became choked with transport in inextricable confusion. Infantry floundered through the snowdrifts. The wheeling advance of the German Tenth Army drove all these masses of men remorselessly southward. Large numbers of Russians broke and tore their way here and there through the encircling grip to the east and north-east. Masses of prisoners were taken, and always the main body of the Russian army was driven towards Augustow Forest.

Everywhere the Russian rear-guards fought with the greatest stubbornness to secure the escape of their comrades, and as the Germans could only drag their artillery forward by using as many as eighteen horses to a single gun, their infantry were often stopped. The Russian counter-attacks from Kovno to prevent the imminent encirclement of General Sievers continued vigorously in the north. On the 13th in the south other strong efforts were made by Russian



THE WINTER BATTLE, FEBRUARY 7-12, 1915

The demonstration towards Warsaw has served its purpose well. The Russians their attention centred upon the threat of the Ninth Army, are unaware alike of the transference of the XXth Corps and the threatening concentration in the north. The Tenth and Eighth German Armies are now on the move, the advance of the XLth Corps of the Eighth Army having begun on February 7 towards Lyck, and that of the Tenth Army, on the left claw of the crab, on the 8th. The main objective, the Russian Tenth Army, is in a precarious position. By February 12 the Germans are before Lyck and their Tenth Army is descending upon the Russians in the Augustow Forest.

forces debouching from the small fortress of Osovet towards Lyck. These again were warded off by the Germans after hard fighting.

The Russian XXth Corps

The frost had now broken and a sudden thaw converted the roads into quagmires of mud. By the night of the 15th the Russian IIIrd and XXVIth Corps had passed Augustow or traversed the forest with heavy losses and lay in great disorder, but outside the claw—around Grodno. But the Russian XXth Corps, with large numbers of stragglers and

tent upon the encirclement of whatever Russians might be in their clutches, pressed continually forward defending themselves both from the troops breaking out of the trap and from the Russian counter-attacks from Grodno. On the 18th the forest was completely encircled.

Thus hopelessly trapped the Russian XXth Corps fought on with supreme devotion. For four days and nights they hurled themselves in vain against the thin invincible lines. On the 21st the crab-claw closed and seized its prey, 30,000 men, with 11 generals and 200

masses of transport and artillery were still in the forest. Their rearguards held its western edge with determination. And now Eichhorn, his right and centre arrested, resolved to repeat the audacious manœuvre which General von François had used at Tannenberg. He ordered his left corps (XXIst) to move southward round the northern side of the forest regardless of the peril which would threaten them in the rear from the fortresses of Grodno. During the 15th, 16th and 17th this thin line of Germans, resolutely in-

guns, laid down their arms, and many thousand German prisoners taken in the earlier fighting were also rescued by their countrymen

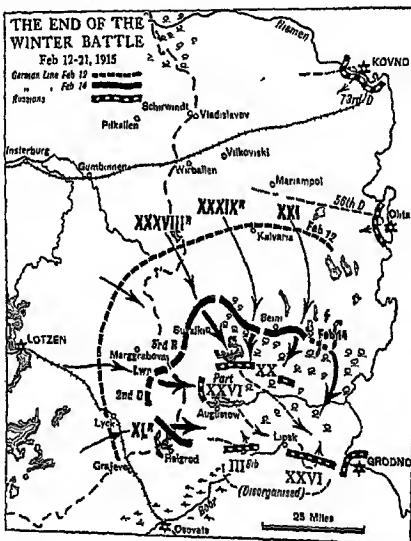
Results of the Battle

Meanwhile the Eighth Army had advanced to the line of the Bobr, hoping to attack the fortress of Osowets. This small place played almost as important a part as Lotzen. Stoutly defended, it endured heavy bombardments and repeated attacks. Its forts were planted on the only eminences of the great plain in which it stood. The utmost efforts of the Germans were fruitless against it.

To the southward behind the Bobr, strongly entrenched, the IInd Siberian Corps also resisted with constancy in what appeared to the Germans to be formidable entrenchments. Indeed the troops declared that they were semi-permanent works strengthened with concrete. Hoffmann disbelieved this, and was in fact right, but it was thought impossible to demand further sacrifices from the willing but now completely exhausted Germans, and about the same time as the Russians in the forest were surrounded, the Winter Battle came to a close. The whole Russian Tenth Army had not been entrapped.

but 110,000 prisoners and upwards of 300 guns were the prizes of the victors, and at least another 100,000 Russians had perished under the fire of the enemy, or sunk for ever in the snow-drifts or the mud. Although many had escaped and two corps still preserved some semblance of order, the Russian Tenth Army had ceased to exist as an effective fighting force.

This awful battle against the worst that nature or warring man could do constitutes an episode unparalleled in military history. Even the massive Hindenburg was chilled by its ghastly character.



THE END OF THE WINTER BATTLE

The Germans entered Lyck on February 24, and by this date their Eighth and Tenth Armies have practically surrounded what remains of the Tenth Russian Army. Two of the Russian Corps the IIId and XXVth, have escaped in disorder in the direction of Grodno but the XXth Corps remains in the forest. The XXIIst German Corps, repeating von François's Tannenberg manoeuvre cuts off the Russian line of retreat and, as at Tannenberg, the battle ends in heavy Russian losses in dead and wounded, and the surrender to the victorious Germans of masses of prisoners and war material.

"The name," he says of the "Winter Battle in Masuria," "charms like an icy wind or the silence of death. As men look back on the course of this battle they will only stand and ask themselves, 'Have earthly beings really done these things or is it all but a fable or a phantom?' Are not these marches in the winter nights, that camp in the icy snowstorm and that last phase of the battle in the forest of Augustow so terrible for the enemy, but the creation of an inspired human fancy?"

He adds further

"In spite of the great tactical success we failed strategically. We had once more managed practically to destroy one of the Russian armies, but fresh enemy forces had immediately come up to take its place, drawn from other fronts to which they had not been pinned down. We could not achieve a decisive result. The superiority of the Russians was too great."

The Fall of Przemyśl

Hindenburg could write thus of the Winter Battle, in spite of all its trophies. His confession of strategic barrenness applied even more forcibly to the Austrian operations at the other extreme of the Eastern Front.

The southern claw of the crah had grasped nothing. Conrad's advance from the Carpathian passes was vigorously resisted. He failed even to cross the Dunajetz in force. Meanwhile, the Russian investment of Przemyśl—siege it could not be called—continued

It appeared that that great fortress, the main base and dépôt of all the Austrian armies which had been ranged in Galicia at the outbreak of war, had only been victualled for three months. The temporary relief effected in October had not been sufficient to replenish its supplies. When the blockade closed again on November 9, the garrison was already straitened. Taught by their unsuccessful assault in October, the Russians patiently awaited the progress of famine.

On March 18, the failure of the southern offensive being manifest, the Austrian garrison made, like Bazaine from Metz, a respectable but hopeless sortie, on the repulse of which the Commander proposed capitulation.

This was a considerable event, and the prizes of the victors were impressive. Besides the stronghold with all its establishments, over 100,000 prisoners and a thousand guns were surrendered by Austria to Russia. The Russian investing army of the same size was liberated for further tasks.

Falkenhayn's Prediction Fulfilled

Thus, the grandiose operation, in the name of which *He* had conjured Falkenhayn's army corps from the west, and in opposing which Falkenhayn had narrowly escaped dismissal, came to the sterile end he had predicted. He was near enough to the summit of power to be able, as occasion served, to point the moral. This was the first step in the revival of his assaulted reputation and impugned authority.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE DEADLOCK IN THE WEST

The Disastrous Year of 1915—The Forlorn Expedient of the Frontal Attack—The Essence of True Military Leadership—A Brief Retrogression—The Genius of H—The Tragedy of the Russian Munitions—Colonel Knox and the Russian Problem—Russia's One Supreme Resource—The Vulnerable Flanks of the Central Powers—Possibilities of the Situation in Respect of Turkey—"All this lay in Our Choice"—Some General Principles

THE year 1915 was fated to be disastrous to the cause of the Allies and to the whole world

The Disastrous Year of 1915

By the mistakes of this year the opportunity was lost of confining the conflagration within limits which though enormous were not uncontrolled. Thereafter the fire roared on till it burnt itself out. Thereafter events passed very largely outside the scope of conscious choice. Governments and individuals conformed to the rhythm of the tragedy, and swayed and staggered forward in helpless violence, slaughtering and squandering on ever-increasing scales, till injuries were wrought to the structure of human society which a century will not efface, and which may conceivably prove fatal to the present civilization.

But in January, 1915, the terrific affair was still not unmanageable. It could have been grasped in human hands and brought to rest in righteous and fruitful victory before the world was exhausted, before the nations were broken, before the empires were shattered to pieces, before Europe was ruined.

It was not to be. Mankind was not to escape so easily from the catastrophe in which it had involved itself. Pride was everywhere to be humbled, and nowhere to receive its satisfaction. No splendid harmony was to crown the wonderful achievements. No prize was to reward the sacrifices of the combatants. Victory was to be bought so dear as to be almost indistinguishable from defeat. It was not to give even security to the

victors. There never was to be "The silence following great words of Peace."¹ To the convulsions of the struggle must succeed the impotent turmoil of the aftermath. Noble hopes, high comradeship and glorious daring were in every nation to lead only to disappointment, disillusion and prostration. The sufferings and impoverishment of peoples might arrest their warfare, the collapse of the defeated might still the cannonade, but their hatreds continue unappeased and their quarrels are still unsettled. The most complete victory ever gained in arms has failed to solve the European problem or remove the dangers which produced the war.

* * * *

When the old year closed a complete deadlock existed between the great combatants in the west by land and by sea. The German fleet remained sheltered in its fortified harbours, and the British Admiralty had discovered no way of drawing it out. The trench lines ran continuously from the Alps to the sea, and there was no possibility of manœuvre. The Admirals pinned their faith to the blockade, the Generals turned to a war of exhaustion and to still more dire attempts to pierce the enemy's front. All the wars of the world could show nothing to compare with the continuous front which had now been established. Ramparts more than 350 miles long, ceaselessly guarded by millions of men, sustained by thousands of cannon,

¹ Rupert Brooke—his last and most pregnant line

stretched from the Swiss frontier to the North Sea. The Germans had tried in October and November to break through while these lines were still weak and thin. They had failed with heavy losses. The French and British Headquarters had still to be instructed in the defensive power of barbed wire and entrenched machine guns.

For more than forty years frontal attacks had been abandoned on account of the severity of modern fire. In the Franco-German War the great German victories had been won by wide turning movements executed on one flank or the other by considerable forces. In the Russo-Japanese War this method was invariably pursued by the victors. Thus at Liao-yang it was General Kuroki's army which turned the Russian left, and at Mukden General Nogi's army, brought specially from Port Arthur, turned the Russian right. It was certain

that frontal attacks unaccompanied by turning movements on the flank would be extremely costly and would probably fail. But now, in France and Flanders for the first time in recorded experience there were no flanks to turn. The turning movement, the oldest manœuvre in war, became impossible. Neutral territory or salt water barred all further extension of the Front, and the great armies lay glaring at each other at close quarters without any true idea of what to do next.

The Forlorn Expedient of the Frontal Attack

It was in these circumstances that the French High Command, carrying with them the British, turned again to the forlorn expedient of the frontal attack which had been discarded in the bitter experiences of the past. Meanwhile, the power of modern weapons had



Photo De Vissager Illustrations

FRENCH ALGERIAN CAVALRY

Among the most picturesque troops to fight on the side of the Allies were the Spahis, or French Algerian Cavalry. The word "Spahi" is identical in meaning with Sepoy, the native soldier of our Indian Army. The men of the Algerian cavalry are fine horsemen, a statement which can be vouched for by any who have seen them at exercise in Morocco. This photograph was taken in the market square of Fumes in November 1914.

doubled and trebled since the Russo-Japanese War, and was increasing almost daily. Moreover, the use of barbed wire and the consequent need of prolonged bombardment to destroy it, effectually prevented any chance of surprise. There existed at this period no means of taking the offensive successfully in France; the centre could not be pierced, and there were no flanks to turn. Confronted with this deadlock, military art remained dumb; the Commanders and their General Staffs had no plan except the frontal attacks which all their experience and training had led them to reject; they had no policy except the policy of exhaustion.

No war is so sanguinary as the war of exhaustion. No plan could be more unpromising than the plan of frontal attack. Yet on these two brutal expedients the military authorities of France and Britain consumed, during three successive years, the flower of their national manhood. Moreover, the dull carnage of the policy of exhaustion did not even apply equally to the combatants.



Photo L. V. A.

HOVIES QUARANTE CHEVEAUX HUIT"

A familiar sight to all who served in the war was the French railway wagon bearing the cryptic legend concerning its capacity. Here are horses and men of the Royal Artillery enjoying a brief halt on the way up to the front.

The Anglo-French offensives of 1915, 1916 and 1917 were in nearly every instance, and certainly in the aggregate, far more costly to the attack than to the German defence. It was not even a case of exchanging a life for a life. Two, and even three, British or French lives were repeatedly paid for the killing of one enemy, and grim calculations were made to prove that in the end the Allies would still have a balance of a few millions to spare. It will appear not only horrible but incredible to future generations that

such doctrines should have been imposed by the military profession upon the ardent and heroic populations who yielded themselves to their orders

It is a tale of the torture, mutilation or extinction of millions of men, and of the sacrifice of all that was best and noblest in an entire generation. The crippled broken world in which we dwell to-day is the inheritor of these awful events. Yet all the time there were ways open by which this slaughter could have been avoided and the period of torment curtailed. There were regions where flanks could have been turned, there were devices by which fronts could have been pierced. And these could have been discovered and made *mercifully effective*, not by any departure from the principles of military art, but simply by the true comprehension of those principles and their application to the actual facts

* * * *

The Essence of True Military Leadership

Battles are won by slaughter and manoeuvre. The greater the general, the more he contributes in manoeuvre,

the less he demands in slaughter. The theory which has exalted the "*bataille d'usure*" or "battle of wearing down" into a foremost position, is contradicted by history and would be repulsed by the greatest captains of the past. Nearly all the battles which are regarded as masterpieces of the military art, from which have been derived the foundation of states and the fame of commanders, have been battles of manoeuvre in which very often the enemy has found himself defeated by some novel expedient or device, some queer, swift, unexpected thrust or stratagem. In many such battles the losses of the victors have been small. There is required for the composition of a great commander not only massive common sense and reasoning power, not only imagination, but also an element of legerdemain, an original and sinister touch, which leaves the enemy puzzled as well as beaten. It is because military leaders are credited with gifts of this order which enable them to ensure victory and save slaughter that their profession is held in such high honour. For if their art were nothing more than a dreary process of exchanging



Photo Newspaper Illustrations

THE BIRTHPLACE OF JOAN OF ARC

Domrémy, the reputed birthplace of the French heroine and saviour, Joan of Arc, is seen here as it appeared after the German invasion in 1914. Hardly one stone is left standing upon another, so fierce has been the bombardment. Domrémy is about six miles north west of Neufchâteau in the department of Vosges.



THE CHURCH TOWER AT ALBERT

Photo Copyright

One of the most remarkable sights on the Western Front during the Great War was the figure of the Virgin bearing in her arms the infant Saviour, leaning over at right angles to the church tower at Albert. The metal framework which supported the statue was partly destroyed by a shell and the statue, heeling over, remained for a time suspended in this position.

lives, and counting heads at the end, they would rank much lower in the scale of human esteem

* * * *

There are many kinds of manoeuvres in war, some only of which take place upon the battlefield. There are manoeuvres far to the flank or rear. There are manoeuvres in time, in diplomacy, in mechanics, in psychology, all of which are removed from the battlefield, but react often decisively upon it, and the object of all is to find easier ways, other than sheer slaughter, of achieving the main purpose. The distinction between politics and strategy diminishes as the point of view is raised. At the summit true politics and strategy are one. The manoeuvre which brings an ally into the field is as serviceable as that which wins a great battle. The manoeuvre which gains an important strategic point may be less valuable than that which placates or overawes a dangerous neutral.

We suffered grievously at the beginning of the war from the want of a common clearing house where these different relative values could be established and exchanged. A single prolonged conference between the allied chiefs, civil and martial, in January, 1915, might have saved us from inestimable misfortune. Nothing could ever be thrashed out by correspondence. Principals must be brought together, and plans concerted in common. Instead each allied State pursued in the main its own course, keeping the others more or less informed. The armies and navies dwelt in every country in separate compartments. The war problem, which was all one, was tugged at from many different and disconnected standpoints. War, which knows no rigid divisions between French, Russian and British Allies, between Land, Sea and Air, between gaining victories and alliances, between supplies and fighting men, between propaganda and machinery, which is, in fact, simply the sum of all forces and pressures operative at a given period, was dealt with piecemeal. And years of cruel teaching were necessary before even imperfect unifications of study, thought, command and action were achieved.

The men of the Beginning must not be judged wholly by the light of the End. All had to learn and all had to suffer. But it was not those who learned the slowest who were made to suffer most.

* * * *

A Brief Retrogression

But if a complete deadlock had been reached in the west, events were moving with imperious violence in the east. These events justify a brief retrogression in the narrative.

When, in August, 1914, it was seen that the Germans were concentrating practically four-fifths of their armies against France and leaving only a handful of Divisions to guard their eastern frontiers against Russia, high hopes were entertained that these slender forces would be overwhelmed or forced to retreat, and that Germany would be invaded continuously from the east. In the darkest moments before the Marne, when it was necessary to contemplate the loss of Paris and a resistance desperately maintained along the Loire, we had comforted ourselves with the belief that the Russian masses would be rolling forward upon Dantzig, upon Breslau, onwards into the heart of the German Empire. We counted on this increasing pressure from the east to retrieve the situation in the west, and to force the Germans to recall their invading armies to the defence of their own soil.

We have seen how the loyal conduct of the Czar and the ardour of the Russian armies and nation had precipitated a rapid offensive into East Prussia within a fortnight of the outbreak of war. We know that the effects of this offensive upon the nerves of the German Headquarters Staff had led to the withdrawal of two Army Corps from the German right in Belgium during the crisis before the Marne. It may well be argued that this event was decisive upon the fate of the battle. And if this be true, homage will be rendered to the Czar and his soldiers long after this ingrate generation has passed away.

The Genius of H.

But, for this supreme achievement Russia had paid a fearful price. No

THE DEB

sooner were the armies in contact than the bravery and superior numbers of the Russians were found quite unequal to the leadership, the science and the discipline of Germany. The twenty cavalry and infantry divisions which formed the Army of Rennenkampf, the fifteen divisions of Samsonoff, were confronted by fourteen German divisions, and at the head of this small but resolute and trustworthy army stood the rugged Hindenburg and a Major-General fresh from the capture of Liège whose name, till then unknown, will rank with the great Commanders of the past. In the frightful battles of Tannenberg (August 25-31) and of the Masurian Lakes (September 5-15) the Army of Samsonoff was cut to pieces with the slaughter or capture of 100,000 men, and the Army of Rennenkampf decisively defeated. The audacious combinations whereby Hindenburg and Ludendorff overwhelmed within little more than a fortnight two armies, each of which was stronger than their own, have appeared so astonishing that treachery has been invoked as the only possible explanation. History, however, will dwell upon the results, and it was with these that we were confronted.

The Russian armies, which even in their first vigour and when fully equipped were no match for the Germans, showed themselves on the whole superior to the variegated forces of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. While the defeats of Tannenberg and of the Masurian Lakes were endured by Russia in the north, her armies pressed forward into Galicia, and in a series of tumultuous struggles over a great expanse of ground gained a substantial victory in what has been called the Battle of Lemberg. This event covered, masked and partially counter-balanced the disasters in the north. In fact the victory in Galicia bulked so largely in the accounts published in France and Britain, that the catastrophe in East Prussia made little or no impression.

Hindenburg and Ludendorff now laid hands upon the defeated Austrians and proceeded to reinforce and reorganize their front. There followed the winter war in the east. In the snow or mud of Poland

over enormous fronts swinging backwards and forwards with varying fortunes, the Russians grappled manfully with their antagonists. The German situation in France after the Battle of the Marne, and the great drive in October and November against the Channel ports, forbade the withdrawal from the west of reinforcements for the east. Ludendorff's first combined movement against Warsaw, conceived with his usual hardihood, proved a task beyond his strength. The Grand Duke Nicholas stubbornly and skilfully withstood him, and the advancing German armies were forced to recoil amid the indescribable conditions of a Polish winter.

Yet here again the trustworthy qualities of the German troops and leadership were displayed, and more than once, nearly surrounded by superior numbers, they cut their way out and fought their way back with discipline and determination. Against Austria, Russia continued to make headway. In November, 1914, the Grand Duke could still contemplate an advance through Silesia into the heart of Germany.

The Tragedy of the Russian Munitions

But thereafter came an awful change. Russia had entered the war with about 5,000 guns and 5,000,000 shells. During the first three months of fighting she fired on an average about 45,000 shells a day. The output of her factories in Russia did not exceed 35,000 shells a month. By the beginning of December, 1914, scarcely 300,000 shells, or barely a week's requirement, remained out of the initial reserve. At the moment when the Russian armies needed the greatest support from their artillery, they found their guns suddenly frozen into silence.

No less grim was the shortage of rifles. In the fierce, confused, unceasing fighting of the first three months over 1,000,000 rifles out of five and a half millions had been lost, captured or destroyed. By the end of the year over 1,350,000 Russians had been killed, wounded or made prisoners. The barracks of the Empire were full of lusty manhood. 800,000 trained drafts were ready for despatch to the front, but



Photo Central News

A FRENCH PERISCOPE IN USE

During the first year of the war when the armies of all the combatants still retained a proportion of highly-trained rifle shots who could be employed as snipers any attempt at observation by raising a head above the trench parapet meant certain death. The introduction of the periscope one of which is here shown in use in a French front line trench undoubtedly saved the lives of many who would otherwise have been slain. The periscope is in its essentials merely a box with an aperture at top and bottom and two mirrors each set at an angle of forty-five degrees by means of which any object in No Man's Land which appears in the topmost mirror is reflected down to the bottom mirror and so to the eye of the observer in the trench.

there were no weapons to place in their hands. Every Russian battery was silenced, every Russian battalion was depleted to two-thirds its strength. Many months must elapse before the flow of shells could be resumed, many more months, before the supplies of rifles could overtake the daily wastage. Meanwhile, the Russian armies, hamstringed and paralysed, must await and endure

the vengeance of their foes. Such was the prospect which opened upon Russia and her Allies before the first Christmas of the war was reached.

Colonel Knox and the Russian Problem

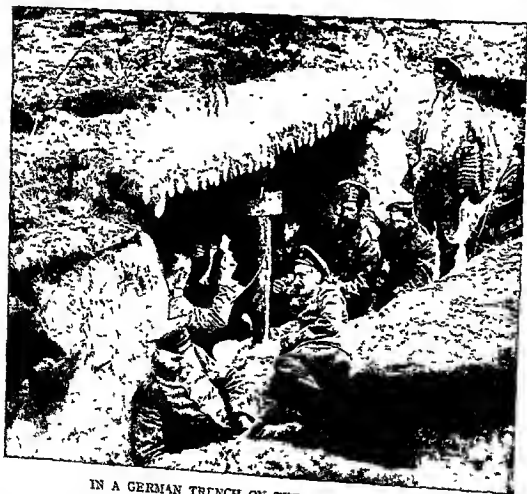
The British Government had at the Russian Headquarters an agent of singular discernment in Colonel Knox. All the facts set out above were unearthed and reported by this officer during November and December. General Sukhomlinoff, the Minister of War, might persist in blind or guilty optimism, the General Staff in Petrograd might declare in answer to the anxious inquiries of General Joffre at the end of September that

"the rate of expenditure of ammunition gave no cause for anxiety", the Grand Duke himself, absorbed in the actual operations, might be unconscious that the ground was crumbling under his feet, but the terrifying secrets of the Russian administration were penetrated by the remorseless scrutiny of Knox. In a series of luminous and pitiless despatches he exposed the position to

the British Government, and these grave forebodings lay upon us during the closing weeks of 1914.

It seemed at times that Russia might be torn in pieces before she could be re-armed. While the deadlock continued on the Western Front, while Joffre pursued the policy of "mihlung"—"*Je les grignote*"—and his staff elaborated schemes for a frontal attack on the German lines in the spring, Russia, with her inexhaustible resources in men and food, might collapse altogether or be forced into a separate peace. And then the whole weight of the Teutonic powers would fall after an interval upon the hard-pressed armies of France and the unready armies of Britain. At the best a long period of weakness, of quiescence and of retirement, must be expected from our great Ally.

No one could measure the disasters which this period must contain. Although in appearance the lines in the east presented a continuous front, they in no way reproduced the conditions of the west. The distances were much greater, the communications much worse. The lines were thinly held on both sides, they could be bulged or broken by any decided advance. How could the Russians maintain their front with hardly any artillery fire, with very few machine guns, and with an increasing scarcity of rifles? Moreover, the Turkish attack on Russia had compelled her in November, at the very moment when the worst facts of her position were becoming apparent and munitions of all kinds were failing, to create and to develop a new front in the Caucasus against the advancing Ottoman armies.



IN A GERMAN TRENCH ON THE EASTERN FRONT

Photo E. N. A.

The men of the German armies made themselves much at home in their trenches, as anyone who has at any time occupied a trench in close proximity to them can bear witness. In the later days of the war the German trenches were equipped and protected on a scale far beyond any attained by the Allies. The average German soldier was much given to impromptu concerts and to any form of amusement which would serve to break the monotony of trench life.





TO THE FRONT LINE NEAR RHEIMS

Photo Central News

* war is almost stereoscopic in its effect. Few pictures show more clearly the type of men
ed during the war. The Tirailleurs or Turcos as they are called greatly distinguished
ainst men of the Prussian Guards

Russia's one Supreme Resource

Russia had, however, one last supreme resource—territory. The enormous size of the country afforded almost unlimited possibilities of retirement, and judicious and timely retirement might secure the vital breathing space. Once again, as in 1812, the Russian armies might withdraw intact into the heart of their Empire, all the time holding on their front large numbers of the enemy. Once again the invaders might be lured into the vast expanses of Russia. And meanwhile the factories of the world could be set to work to supply and re-equip the Russian armies. The situation, though tragic, was not necessarily fatal. If only the will power of Russia did not fail in the ordeal that lay before her, if she could be encouraged to dwell upon the prizes of victory, if intimate and continuous con-

tact could be established between her and the western Allies, there was no reason why her strength should not be restored before the end of 1915.

It is on this basis that the strategy and policy of 1915 can alone be studied.

* * * *

The essence of the war problem was not changed by its enormous scale. The line of the Central Powers from the North Sea to the Aegean and stretching loosely beyond even to the Suez Canal was, after all, in principle not different from the line of a small army entrenched across an isthmus, with each flank resting upon water. As long as France was treated as a self-contained theatre, a complete deadlock existed, and the front of the German invaders could neither be pierced nor turned. But once the view was

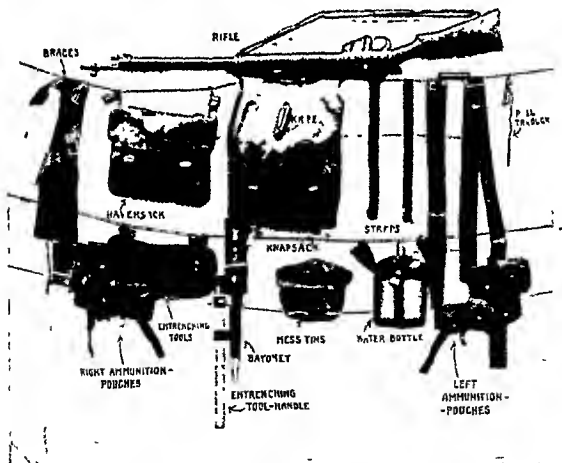


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EQUIPMENT OF THE BRITISH SOLDIER IN 1914

Of the greatest value to the soldiers of the British Army during the Great War was the webbing equipment which formed part of the service dress uniform and which superseded the leather equipment at one time in use. Here are the various articles which, when buckled together, enable the soldier to carry his ammunition, water, rations, entrenching tool, etc.

extended to the whole scene of the war, and that vast war conceived as if it were a single battle, and once the sea power of Britain was brought into play, turning movements of a most far-reaching character were open to the Allies. These turning movements were so gigantic and complex that they amounted to whole wars in themselves. They required armies which in any other war would have been considered large. They rested on sea power, and they demanded a complete diplomacy of their own.

At the very moment when the French High Command was complaining that there were no flanks to turn the Teutonic Empires were in fact vulnerable in an extreme degree on either flank. Thus the three salient facts of the war situation at the beginning of 1915 were first, the deadlock in France, the main and central theatre, secondly, the urgent need of relieving that deadlock before Russia was overwhelmed, and thirdly, the possibility of relieving it by great amphibious and political-strategic operations on either flank.

The Vulnerable Flanks of the Central Powers

Let us, at this point, cast a preliminary glance upon each of the flanks of the battle line.

On the northern flank lay a group of small but virile and cultivated peoples. All were under the impression of the German power, and connected with Germany by many ties but all were acutely conscious that the victory of Germany would reduce them to a state of subservience to the conqueror, and all trembled at the fate which had overtaken Belgium. Holland, mobilized and heavily armed, stood on anxious guard of



WEAVING EQUIPMENT ASSEMBLED ON THE MAN *Photo Copyright*

This type of equipment possesses many advantages from the soldier's point of view. It is light, the only metal parts being brass buckles which serve to hold the various parts together. It is easy to assemble and to clean. Cool and not much affected by rain or damp it can, with a little care, be so fitted that a soldier on parade need never appear badly turned out.

her frontiers. Denmark, through whose territory passed the gateway of the Baltic, was practically defenceless. Norway and Sweden were under the apprehension of Russia not less than of Germany. It would have been wrong to embroil any of these Powers without

being able to defend them by sea and land, and to combine their forces. Had it been possible to achieve this, the position of Germany would have become desperate.

The Dutch army was a substantial factor. The Dutch islands offered invaluable strategic advantages to the British Navy. Denmark could open the door of the Baltic to a British fleet, and the command of the Baltic by the Allies would have afforded a means of direct contact with Russia. This would have rendered the blockade absolute, and would have exposed all Northern Germany to the constant menace of Russian invasion by sea.

Even more remarkable was the aspect of the Southern Flank. Here Serbia, by heroic exertions, had twice repelled the Austrian invaders. Here a weak, divided, and ill-organized Turkey had lately declared war upon the Allies.

Three of the warlike States of the Balkan Peninsula, namely Greece, Serbia and Roumania were divided from the fourth, Bulgaria, by the hatreds of their recent war, but all four were the natural enemies both of Turkey and of Austria and the traditional friends of Britain. Between them these four Powers disposed of organized armies which amounted to 1,100,000 men (Serbia 250,000, Greece 200,000, Bulgaria 300,000, Roumania, 350,000), and their total military man-power was of course greater still.

They had freed themselves from the Turks after centuries of oppression. They could only expand at the expense of Austria and Turkey. Serbia was already fighting for her life against Austria. Roumania coveted Transylvania from Austria-Hungary. Bulgaria looked hungrily to Adrianople, to the Enos-Midia line, and, indeed, to Constantinople.

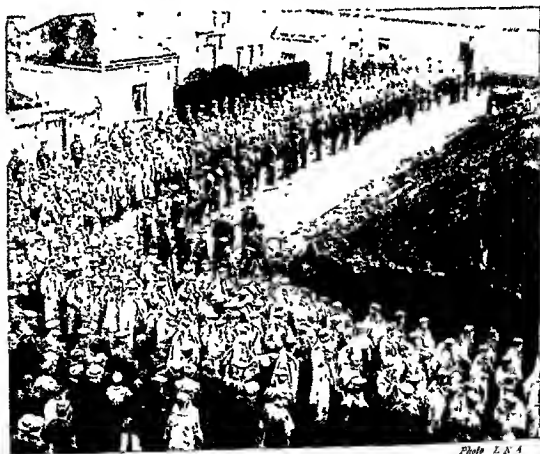
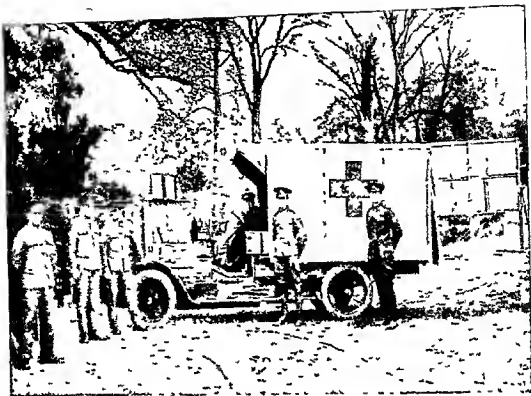


Photo L.N.A.

BOUND FOR THE PRISONER'S CAGES

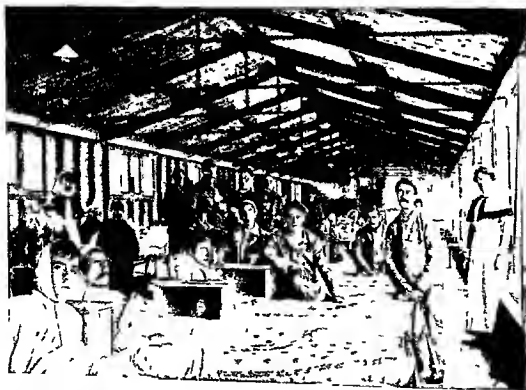
A big haul of German prisoners on their way, under escort, to the rear. Whereas the numbers of prisoners taken on the Western Front in the early stages of the war fell far short of the enormous captures made by H. in the east, nevertheless, as this photograph proves, considerable numbers were taken. These men were largely employed in England or at the base in France, on necessary war work on the land—unloading material, roadmaking and similar tasks.



A MOTOR AMBULANCE IN WARTIME

Photo Copyright

Of all the services operating behind the fighting line, at the base and in England probably one of the most important was the organization set up by the Medical Services. Everything possible was done to ensure that once a man became a casualty he could be removed as quickly and as comfortably as possible to the rear.



IN A BASE HOSPITAL

Photo Copyright

Before a wounded man could enjoy the comfort of a base hospital he would, in all probability, be carried on a stretcher to his regimental aid post where his most pressing needs would receive attention. Thereafter by motor ambulance and hospital train to the field hospitals, clearing stations and the base hospitals or to England.

itself, while Greece saw great numbers of her citizens still held down under the Turkish yoke and several of the fairest provinces and islands of the Turkish Empire mainly inhabited by men of Greek blood

Possibilities of the Situation in Respect of Turkey

If these four States could be induced to lay aside their intestine quarrels and enter the war together under British guidance against Turkey and Austria, the speedy downfall of the Turk was certain. Turkey would be cut off completely from her allies and forced into a separate peace during 1915. The whole of the forces of the Balkan Confederation could then have been directed against the underside of Austria in the following year. If we may consider the fighting forces of the Turkish Empire as the equivalent of 700,000 men, it will be seen that the striking out of this hostile factor, and the simultaneous accession to our strength of new Balkan armies of nearly 1,000,000 men, meant an improvement of our position as against Germany and Austria by one and three-quarter million soldiers. We should have 700,000 soldiers less against us and 1,000,000 more soldiers on our side. The possibility of effecting such a transference of fighting strength was surely a military object of first consequence.

But it was also certain that the rally of the Balkans and the attack upon Turkey could not leave Italy indifferent. Italy was known to be profoundly friendly to the Allied cause, and particularly to Great Britain. She was the hereditary enemy of Austria. She had immense interests in the Balkan Peninsula, in the Turkish Empire, and in the Turkish islands. It seemed highly probable that any decisive or successful action taken by Great Britain in this quarter of the world must draw Italy, with her army of about two millions, directly into the ambit of the Great War as a first-class ally on our side.

* * * *

"All this lay in Our Choice"

The success of amphibious descents or invasions depends upon whether forces

superior to the defender can be carried to the spot in time, and whether these can be continually reinforced more quickly than the enemy. In this the defenders are at a grave disadvantage. Even after the expedition has put to sea, no one can tell for certain where the descent will be made. Although the Central Powers were working on interior lines, this advantage did not countervail the superior mobility of sea power. Britain could at any time in 1915, for instance, have moved 250,000 men (if they had been available) to suitable points on the shores of the Eastern Mediterranean in a fraction of the time required to send an equal number of Germans or Austrians. Moreover, the selection of these points would remain a mystery to the enemy up to the last minute.

He would no doubt learn that the expedition was preparing, and that transports had assembled. But whether they would go north or south could not be known till after they had put to sea. Against such uncertainties it was impossible to prepare with precision beforehand. The amphibious assailants could have plans prepared for either alternative, and need not decide till the last moment which to use. They might pretend to be going north, and then go south. They might change their minds at the last moment. They might practise every feint and deception known to war. If, therefore, the defenders had reinforced their northern flank, that would be a reason for attacking the southern, and conversely. Thus the defence must wait till it was actually struck before knowing what to do. Then and then only could the transportation of armies to the scene begin. Even if the road were open—on the southern flank it was not—the movement of considerable armies and their supplies, and their organization in a new theatre, was a matter of months.

What could not the sea invaders achieve in the interval? What territory could they overrun? What positions could they seize? What defences could they construct? What magazines could they accumulate? What local forces could they defeat or destroy? What



A GERMAN CARTOON IN 1914

This cartoon which like other of the German drawings made in the early part of the war, portrays the German Michael as a world conqueror dealing out punishment to all who have dared to stand in his way. It may be reflected that but for the Marne this fancy might easily have become the grimmest of facts.

allies could they gain? All this lay in our choice in the spring and summer of 1915.

As the war advanced the chances constantly diminished, and the difficulties constantly grew. In the later periods of the war the scale of the armies necessary to secure swift victory in the southern theatre began to exceed the resources, strained in so many ways, of the British Mercantile Marine. There were limits even to the sea power of the Great Amphibian. Gradually under ever-increasing burdens and continual attack and injury these limits became apparent. But 1915 was her hour of overwhelming strength. There lay the supreme opportunity.

There were, in fact, at this juncture, two great plans of using sea power to relieve the murderous deadlock in the west. Both aimed at breaking into and dominating the land-locked waters which guarded the Teutonic flanks. Both would give direct contact with Russia and would rescue our eastern ally from her deadly isolation. Both would affect in a decisive manner a group of neutral States. Both in proportion, as they succeeded, would open up enormous new drains on the resources of the Teutonic

Empires. Should we look to Holland, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, or to Greece, Bulgaria, and Roumania? Should we strike through the Belts at the Baltic, or through the Dardanelles at Constantinople and the Black Sea?

No doubt all these schemes of action were attended by risk, not only to those who executed but to those who devised them. They required intense exertions on a great scale, and involved the certainty of cost. Against such risks, exertions, and costs of action, must be balanced the dangers and consequences of inaction. Before projects of penetrating the Baltic or forcing the Dardanelles by the British Fleet are dismissed as "unsafe" or impracticable, before an invasion of Schleswig-Holstein or the despatch of an army to the Balkan Peninsula or to Gallipoli are condemned as "unsound," the mind of the reader must also dwell upon the bloody slaughters of Loos-Champagne, of the Somme, of Passchendaele, upon the disasters, almost fatal, of Caporetto, 1917, and of March 21, 1918, upon the Russian collapse, revolution and desertion, upon the awful peril of the

submarine warfare in 1917. It is on such a background that all plans for finding, by sudden and complex manœuvres or devices, short cuts to victory can alone be effectually depicted.

Some General Principles

But as a key to the complicated and debatable alternatives which these pages expose, certain practical propositions may be presented. If these are comprehended and assented to, the rest will follow naturally, and each thought will fall into its proper place and just relation. I therefore set them down categorically forthwith.

On Land

- 1 The Decisive theatre is the theatre where a vital decision may be obtained at any given time. The Main theatre is that in which the main armies or fleets are stationed. This is not at all times the Decisive theatre.
- 2 If the fronts or centres of armies cannot be broken, their flanks should be turned. If these flanks rest on the seas, the manœuvres to turn them must be amphibious and dependent on sea power.
- 3 The least-guarded strategic points should be selected for attack, not those most strongly guarded.

- 4 In any hostile combination, once it is certain that the strongest Power cannot be directly defeated itself, but cannot stand without the weakest, it is the weakest that should be attacked.
- 5 No offensive on land should be launched until an effective means—numbers, surprise, munitions, or mechanical devices—of carrying it through has been discovered.

On Sea

- 1 The Grand Fleet should not be hazarded for any purpose less than that of a general sea battle.
- 2 A naval decision should be provoked at the earliest opportunity.
- 3 The Navy should actively aid the Army with its surplus forces.

These general principles remained my guides throughout the whole war. They run counter, of course, to the dominant military view, and diverge to some extent from the naval practice. How far they were justified by events, others must judge, but the history of the struggle will afford many illustrations of their adoption or repudiation by both the combatants and of the consequences which followed therefrom.

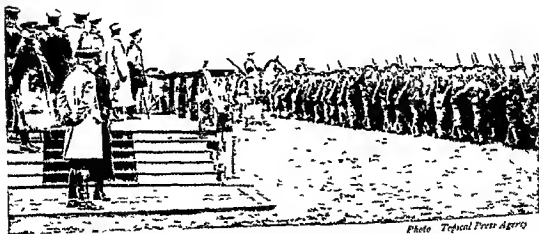


Photo: Topical Press Agency

CANADIANS MARCHING PAST H.M. THE KING IN 1914

The Canadian troops seen here are about to leave Salisbury Plain for France. Men of magnificent physique and first rate fighting qualities they greatly distinguished themselves in France, and in particular at Ypres, the Vimy Ridge and elsewhere. Their organization of the Vimy Ridge sector, in which they made a lengthy stay, was impressive in its thoroughness.

CHAPTER XXXV THE ORIGIN OF TANKS AND SMOKE

crux of the War Problem—Smoke the Ally of Steel Path—Admiral Bagg's 1914
Howitzers—The First Attempt to make a Tank—The Second Attempt—The Lord
Second Attempt to Make a Tank—The Duke of Westminster—The Lord
Ships Committee—The Tank Ordered—Cecil and Repulse—The Lord
Joplin's June 1915—Lord Dunsford and his 6-inch Gun—The Lord
It—Smoke—The Conception of the Tank—The Tank's 1915
Exposure of the Tank—Their Misunderstanding in C.H.O.—The Tank's 1915

MECHANICAL not less than strategic conditions had combined to produce at this early period in the war a deadlock both on sea and land. The strongest fleet was paralysed in its offensive by the menace of the mine and the torpedo. The strongest army was arrested in its advance by the machine gun. On getting into certain positions were necessary for offensive action, ships were sunk by under water explosions, and soldiers were cut down by streams of bullets. This was the evil which lay at the root of all our perplexities.

It was no use endeavouring to remedy this evil on sea by keeping the ships in harbour, or on land by squandering the lives and valour of endless masses of men. The mechanical danger must be overcome by a mechanical remedy. Once this was done, both the stronger fleet and the stronger armies would regain their normal offensive rights. Until this were done, both would be baffled and all would suffer.

Crux of the War Problem

If we master the fact that this was the crux of the war problem, as it was plainly apparent from the end of 1914 onwards, the next step in thought will be found equally simple. Something must be discovered which would render ships immune from the torpedo, and make it unnecessary for soldiers to bare their breasts to the machine-gun hail. This very definite evil and ugly fact that a torpedo or mine would blow a hole in the bottom of a ship, and that any one bullet out of countless streams discharged

by machinery would fatally pierce the body of a man was not one which could be ignored. It must be conquered if the war was to progress and victory to be won. The remedy when stated appeared to be so simple that it was for months or even years counted and disregarded by many of the leading men in both the great fighting professions.

Reduced to its essence, it consisted in interposing a thin plate of steel between the side of the ship and the attacking torpedo, or between the body of a man and the approaching bullet.

Here then was one of the great secrets of the war and of the world in 1915. But hardly anyone would believe it. This sovereign, priceless key to invulnerable defences lay there in the dust for everyone to see, and almost all the great responsible authorities stood gazing at it with vacant eyes. Those who perceived it, soldiers, sailors, men, civilians, were a class apart outside the currents of orthodox opinion and for them was reserved the long and thankless struggle to convert authority and to procure action. Eventually they succeeded.

On sea authority intervened at an early stage. On land the process was more painful. The Monitor and the "blinded" or "blistered ship" were the beginning of the torpedo-proof fleet. The Tank was the beginning of the bullet-proof army. Both of these devices, when the difficulties of their application were surmounted, would have restored to the stronger fleet or army the offensive powers of which they had been deprived.

by new mechanical developments. But when at last Monitors, "Bbsters" and Tanks had been devised and built and were placed under Naval and Military Commanders-in-Chief, the usefulness of both was largely thrown away. The Monitors—the original types of which were no doubt far from perfect—were not developed, and were never employed as a part of any great naval offensive, while the Tanks were providently exposed to the enemy long before they were numerous enough to produce decisive effects. Nevertheless the Tanks survived to play their part.

Smoke the Ally of Steel Plate

Closely allied to the problem of finding ways of attacking by sea and land lay the great subject of Smoke. To make an artificial fog which would blanket off a particular area so that men or ships could traverse it or occupy it without the enemy seeing where to shoot at them, was a second most simple and obvious expedient. Smoke was the ally and comrade of the Steel Plate. They went forward together, each helping the other and multiplying their joint effect.

And behind smoke lay a more baleful development—Poisonous Smoke—smoke that would not only obstruct the vision but destroy the eye, smoke that would not only blindfold the machine gunner but strangle him.

All these ideas had already dawned before the year 1914 was over.

* * * *

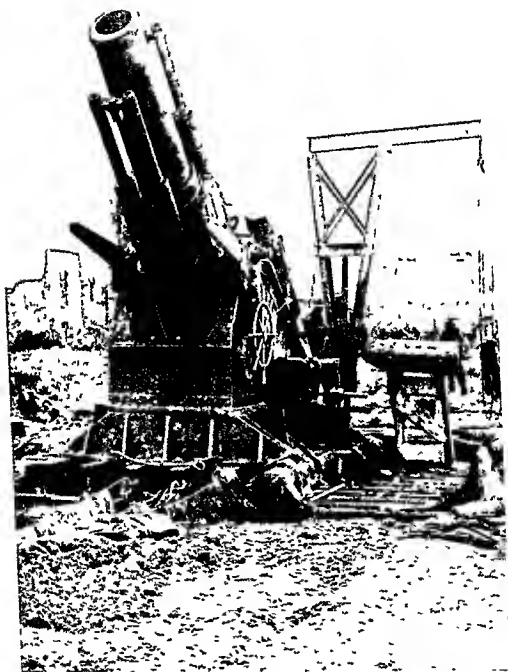
In the early weeks of the war the Admiralty had been asked to assume responsibility for the defence of Britain against aerial attack. This necessitated the posting on the Belgian and French coasts of Air Squadrons based on Dunkirk to attack any Zeppelin or aeroplane shed which the enemy might establish in the invaded territories. This led to the formation of armoured-car squadrons to protect the advanced bases which our naval aeroplanes might require to use. The enemy, harassed by the armoured cars, cut gaps in the roads, and I called immediately for means of bridging these gaps. Meanwhile the armoured cars began to multi-

ply, but just as they became numerous and efficient, the trench lines on both sides reached the sea, and there was no longer open ground for manœuvre or any flanks to turn. As we could not go round the trenches, it was evidently necessary to go over them. Thus the Air was the first cause that took us to Dunkirk. The armoured car was the child of the air, and the Tank its grandchild. This was the point which the chain of causation had reached in the second week of October, 1914.

Admiral Bacon's 15-inch Howitzers

Since Admiral Bacon had retired from the Navy, he had become general manager of the Coventry Ordnance Works. In 1913 I had kept this firm, which comprised one-third of our heavy-gun-producing power, alive by assigning it some of the 15-inch guns and turrets for the fast battleships. A few days after the war had begun I received a letter from Admiral Bacon stating that he had designed a 15-inch howitzer that could be transported by road. Interested in this astonishing assertion, I sent for him. He then spoke with energy and conviction about the general artillery aspects of the war, predicting in particular that existing fortresses would not be able to withstand the shells of great modern cannon or howitzers which were far more formidable than any contemplated at the date of their construction. I listened with interest, and when during the next fortnight the forts, first of Liège and then of Namur, were swiftly destroyed by the German siege guns, I sent for Admiral Bacon again. I told him his prediction had come true, and I asked whether he could make some big howitzers for the British Army, and how long it would take. He replied he could make a 15-inch howitzer in five months and thereafter deliver one every fortnight. I thereupon proposed to the War Office to order ten.

General von Donop, the Master General, was staggered at the idea of "this novel piece of ordnance," and expressed doubts whether it could be made or would be useful when made. But Lord Kitchener was much attracted by the idea, and the order went forward.



15-INCH HOWITZER NEAR YPRES

Photo Imperial War Museum

One of the great guns employed against the German lines in Flanders. Guns of this type owed their origin as described in the text to Admiral Bacon. They were transported on caterpillar tractors. The howitzers proved themselves to be one of the most effective types of weapon for offensive action against fortified trench lines. Their high angle fire which enables the gunners to drop heavy shells with accuracy and destructive effect directly on top of concrete shelters and emplacements was a potent factor in dislodging the enemy from positions of strength.

forthwith I promised Admiral Bacon that if he completed his howitzers in the incredibly short time fixed, he should himself command them in France. The utmost expedition was therefore assured, and in fact the first of these monsters, though not ordered till after the fall of Namur, fired in the battle of Neuve Chapelle.

I was kept closely informed about their design and progress, and at the outset learned that each one with its ammunition and platform would be moved in the field in sections, by eight enormous caterpillar tractors. The

pictures of these vehicles were extremely suggestive, and when Admiral Bacon showed them to me in October, I at once asked whether they would be able to cross trenches and carry guns and fighting men, or whether he could make any that would.

The First Attempt to Make a Tank

As the result of the discussion that followed, Admiral Bacon produced a design for a caterpillar tractor which would cross a trench by means of a portable bridge which it laid down before itself and hauled up after passing over, and early in November, 1914, I directed him to make an experimental machine, and to lay the project before both Sir John French and Lord Kitchener meanwhile. On February 13, 1915, the model showing promise, I ordered thirty to be constructed.

It was not until May, 1915, that the first of these engines with the bridging device was tested by the War Office. It was then rejected because it could not descend a four-foot bank and go through three feet of water (a feat not achieved by any tank up to the end of the war) or fulfil other extremely severe and indeed vexatious conditions. My order for the thirty had, however, been cancelled before their trial took place, as by that time we achieved a better design through an altogether different agency. Thus ended the first and earliest effort to make a trench-crossing vehicle or so-called "Tank" during the Great War.

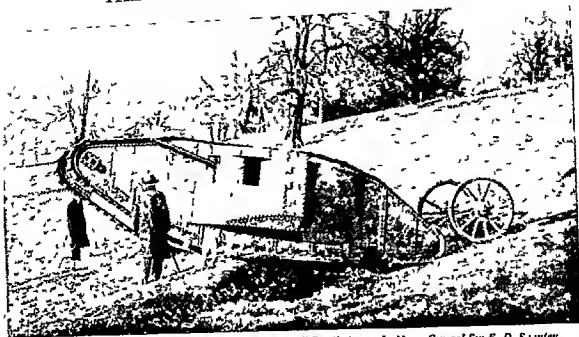
The sequence of events in the second attempt to make a tank and secure its adoption by the military authorities was as follows —



Photo Lafayette

MAJOR GENERAL SIR ERNEST SWINTON

One of the ablest officers to serve in the British Army during the period in which occurred the Boer War and the Great War. General Swinton took a leading part in evolving the engines of war now known as tanks. In the early stages of the war he was the official "Eye Witness," or Official Correspondent with the British Expeditionary Force in France. His writings include that particularly masterly little book, well known to every officer in pre-war days, *The Defence of Buffer's Drift*.



Reproduced by kind permission of the publishers from "Eye Witness" by Major General Sir E. D. Swinton

THE ORIGINAL TANK 'MOTHER'

This photograph, taken in Hatfield Park, the secret trial ground for the early tanks, shows the first successful type to be evolved. This tank known as 'Mother' was put through her paces at Hatfield Park on February 2, 1916, before a group of distinguished spectators which included Earl Kitchener. It has been recorded by General Swinton how on that occasion the Minister for War was not impressed by the new invention and held the view that tanks would quickly be put out of action by the enemy's artillery.

The Second Attempt

Quite independently of what has been narrated above, about the middle or end of October, Colonel E. D. Swinton, who was attached to General Headquarters, France, as Eye-Witness or Official Correspondent, also realized and visualized the need of such a weapon. He accordingly broached the project to Colonel Hankey. At the end of December, Colonel Hankey wrote a paper on the need of this and other mechanical devices, which he circulated to the various Members of the Cabinet directly concerned in the conduct of the war.

Reading this paper brought me back to the subject on which Admiral Bacon had already been given instructions, and on January 5 I wrote a letter to the Prime Minister from which I quote the significant paragraphs —

It would be quite easy in a short time to fit up a number of steam tractors with small armoured shelters, in which men and machine guns could be placed, which would be bullet-proof. Used at

¹ Afterwards Sir Maurice Hankey, Secretary of the Committee of Imperial Defence and at this time of the War Council.

night they would not be affected by artillery fire to any extent. The caterpillar system would enable trenches to be crossed quite easily, and the weight of the machine would destroy all wire entanglements. Forty or fifty of these engines prepared secretly and brought into position at nightfall could advance quite certainly into the enemy's trenches, smashing away all the obstructions and sweeping the trenches with their machine-gun fire and with grenades thrown out of the top. They would then make so many *points d'appui* for the British supporting infantry to rush forward and rally on them. They can then move forward to attack the second line of trenches. The cost would be small. If the experiment did not answer, what harm would be done? An obvious measure of prudence would have been to have started something like this two months ago. It should certainly be done now.

The shield is another obvious experiment which should have been made on a considerable scale. What does it matter which is the best pattern? A large number should have been made of

various patterns, some to carry, some to wear, some to wheel. If the mud now prevents the workings of shields or traction engines, the first frost would render them fully effective. With a view to this I ordered a month ago twenty shields on wheels to be made on the best design the Naval Air Service could devise. These will be ready shortly, and can, if necessary, be used for experimental purposes.

A third device which should be used systematically and on a large scale is smoke artificially produced. It is possible to make small smoke barrels which on being lighted generate a great column of dense black smoke which could be turned off or on at will. There are other matters closely connected with this to which I have already drawn your attention, but which are of so secret a character that I do not put them down on paper.

One of the most serious dangers that we are exposed to is the possibility that the Germans are acting and [are] preparing all these surprises, and that we may at any time find ourselves exposed to some entirely new form of attack. A committee of engineer officers and other experts ought to be sitting continually at the War Office to formulate schemes and examine suggestions and I would repeat that it is not possible in most cases to have lengthy experiments beforehand. If the devices are to be ready by the time they are required it is indispensable that manufacture should proceed simultaneously with experiment. The worst that can happen is that a comparatively small sum of money is wasted.

Fate of the Second Attempt to Make a Tank

Mr Asquith, two or three days after receiving my letter of January 5, laid it personally before Lord Kitchener, and urged him strongly to prosecute research into all these matters. Lord Kitchener, who was entirely favourable, thereupon remitted the project to the Department of the Master General of the Ordnance. This process was mortal to the second attempt to make a Tank, and the project was decently interred in the archives of the War Office.

I did not know what had happened as

a result of my letter to the Prime Minister, or what the War Office were doing, but I formed the impression that no real progress was being made, and that the military authorities were quite unconvinced either of the practicability of making such engines or of their value when made. I, however, continued to think about the subject from time to time whenever the very great pressure of Admiralty and public business afforded an opportunity. Accordingly, on January 19, 1915, I sent a minute to the Director of the Air Division instructing him to make certain experiments with steam rollers with a view to smashing in the trenches of the enemy by the mere weight of the engine. I had, of course, no expert knowledge of mechanics, and could only give or foster ideas of a suggestive character and provide funds and give orders for experiments and action. This particular variant (which was mentioned in Colonel Hankey's paper of December 28) broke down through its mechanical defects, but there is no doubt that it played its part in forming opinions among the armoured-car officers and experts connected with the armoured-car squadrons and in setting imagination to work for other and more helpful solutions.

The Duke of Westminster's Dinner

So here are three quite separate efforts to procure the manufacture and adoption of the kind of vehicles afterwards called "Tanks," all of which had been brought to failure either by mechanical defects or by official obstruction. This deadlock might well have continued for an indefinite period of time. No demand for such weapons had come, or for many months came, from the military authorities in France, every suggestion from civilian or other quarters had been turned down by the War Office. The Dardanelles operations were beginning, and almost every hour of my day was occupied with grave Admiralty business. However, the Duke of Westminster, who commanded a squadron of armoured cars and who was himself a focus of discussion on these subjects, invited me to dine on February 17 to meet several officers from the armoured-car squadrons. The conversation turned on cross-

country armoured vehicles, and Major Hetherington, who also belonged to the armoured-car squadrons and knew of the various experiments which had been made, spoke with force and vision on the whole subject, advocating the creation of land battleships on a scale far larger than has ever been found practicable.

As a result of this conversation, I went home determined that I would give imperative orders without delay to secure the carrying forward in one form or another of the project in which I had so long believed. Accordingly I directed Major Hetherington to submit his plans, which were at that time for a platform mounted on enormous wheels 40 feet in diameter, and I forwarded these plans two days later to the First Sea Lord (Lord Fisher), urging him to devote his great energies and mechanical aptitudes to getting them carried through.

The Landships Committee

In addition to this, the next day, the 20th, I sent for Mr Tennyson-d'Eyncourt,¹ the Chief Constructor of the Navy, and convened a conference which, as I was ill at the time, was held in my bedroom at the Admiralty on the afternoon of that day. As the result of it the Landships Committee of the Admiralty was formed by my orders, under the Presidency of Mr Tennyson - d'Eyncourt, reporting direct to me, and they were urged in the most strenuous manner to labour to the very utmost to secure a solution of the problem.

From the formation of this committee on February 20, 1915, till the appearance of tanks in action in August, 1916, during the Battle of the Somme, there is an unbroken chain of causation.

On March 20, Mr Tennyson-d'Eyncourt reported to me that his committee had evolved two possible types, much smaller than Major Hetherington had imagined, one moved by large wheels and the other by caterpillar action. I immediately called by minute for estimates of time and money.

The Tanks Ordered

These were supplied, and on March 26 I took the responsibility for ordering

¹ Afterwards Sir Eustace Tennyson-

eighteen of these vehicles, which at that time were called landships, six of which were to be of the wheel type and twelve of the caterpillar type.

I thus took personal responsibility for the expenditure of the public money involved, about £70,000. I did not invite the Board of Admiralty to share this responsibility with me. I did not inform the War Office, for I knew they would raise objections to my interference in this sphere, and I knew by this time that the Department of the Master General of the Ordnance was not very receptive of such ideas. Neither did I inform the Treasury.

It was a serious decision to spend this large sum of money on a project so speculative, about the merits of which no high expert military or naval authority had been convinced. The matter, moreover, was entirely outside the scope of my own Department or of any normal powers which I possessed. Had the tanks proved wholly abortive or never been accepted or never used in war by the military authorities, and had I been subsequently summoned before a Parliamentary Committee, I could have offered no effective defence to the charge that I had wasted public money on a matter which was not in any way my business, and in regard to which I had not received expert advice in any responsible military quarter. The extremely grave situation of the war, and my conviction of the need of breaking down the deadlock which blocked the production of these engines, are my defence, but that defence is only valid in view of their enormous subsequent success.

A general observation may here be made. There was no novelty about the idea of an armoured vehicle to travel across country and pass over trenches and other natural obstacles while carrying guns and fighting men. Mr H. G. Wells, in an article written in 1903, had practically exhausted the possibilities of imagination in this sphere. Moreover, from very early times the history of war is filled with devices of this character for use in the attack of fortresses and fortified positions. The general principles of applying the idea were also fairly obvious. Bullet-proof armour had been

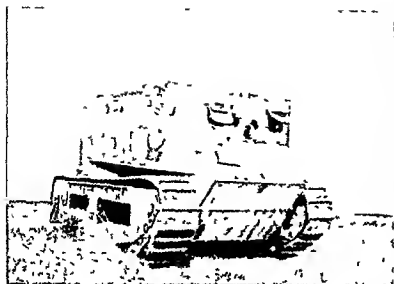


Photo Imperial War Museum

"LITTLE WILLIE"

The first tank, shown above, was known as 'Little Willie'. This machine was not a success. When put through its tests on September 19, 1915, it failed to fulfil the necessary requirements and, in due course, gave place to the improved type shown below.

carried to a high point of perfection by various hardening processes. The internal-combustion engine supplied the motive power. The Pedrail and Caterpillar systems were both well known, and had been widely applied in many parts of the world. Thus the three elements out of which tanks have been principally constituted were at hand to give effect to the idea.

Credit and Responsibility

There are, however, two things to be kept distinct —

(a) The responsibility for initiating and sustaining the action which led to the tanks being produced, and

(b) The credit for solving the extremely difficult problems connected with design apart from main principles.

These services were entirely separate. There never was a moment when it was possible to say that a tank had been 'invented'. There never was a person

about whom it could be said "this man invented the tank." But there was a moment when the actual manufacture of the first tanks was definitely ordered, and there was a moment when an effective machine was designed as the direct outcome of this authorization.

I consider that the responsibility for the mechanical execution of the project was borne by Mr. Tennyson-d'Eyncourt. With out his high authority and immense expert knowledge the project

could not have been carried to success. Under his guidance, invaluable services in the sphere of adaptation and manufacture were rendered by Sir William Tritton and Major Wilson. But I sanctioned the expenditure of public money in reliance upon Mr. Tennyson-d'Eyncourt's gifts and knowledge, and his assurances that the mechanical difficulties could be solved. I trusted him, as I would have trusted Admiral Bacon in the earlier project, to say whether the thing could

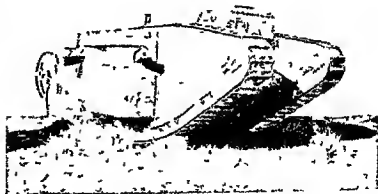


Photo Imperial War Museum

THE MARK I TANK

The first type to go into action. When these engines were first evolved it became necessary for obvious reasons to give them a name which would provide no clue as to their nature. To describe them as landships or land cruisers would have been fatal. The appearance of 'Little Willie' suggested the simple word "tank."

be done or not and to find a way round and through the technical difficulties. And once he said it could be done, I was prepared to incur both risk and responsibility in providing the necessary funds and in issuing the necessary authority. It was with him alone that I dealt, and it was from me alone that he received his orders.

Others, such as Colonel Swinton and Captain T. G. Tulloch, had seized the idea and had even laid specific proposals before the War Office in January, 1915. These officers had not, however, the executive authority which alone could ensure progress, and their efforts were brought to nothing by the obstruction of some of their superiors. They were unfortunate in not being able to command the resources necessary for action, or to convince those who had the power to act.

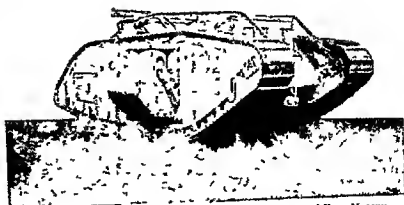


Photo Imperial War Museum

MARK V TANK

One of the later types as employed in 1918. This tank was sufficiently large to carry infantry and was designed for that purpose. Unfortunately there was one defect. The ventilation was not sufficient, and in consequence the infantry so transported were half asphyxiated before they reached their destination.

Tanks in Jeopardy, June, 1914

After I left the Admiralty at the end of May, 1915, another moment of extreme peril threatened the enterprise. The new Board of Admiralty included three out of the four naval members of the old Board. Reinforced by Sir Henry Jackson, the new First Sea Lord, they appear to have viewed the financial commitments which had already been incurred to an extent of about £45,000 as either undesirable or wholly beyond the sphere of Admiralty interests. They therefore, in the general disfavour in which my affairs were at this time involved, proposed to terminate the contracts and scrap the whole project. However, Mr. Tennyson-d'Eyncourt remained faithful to the charge I had laid upon him. He warned me of the decisions which were impending, or which had perhaps been taken, and I thereupon as a Member

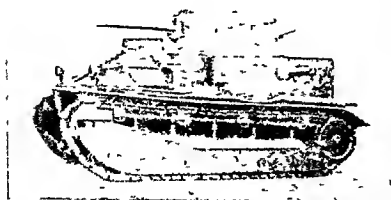


Photo Imperial War Museum

A MODERN TYPE

The army of to-day is equipped with tanks which for speed and armament far exceed the early types. The engine shown above is known as a Mark II Medium and as can be seen carries an imposing array of guns.

of the War Committee of the Cabinet appealed personally to Mr Balfour, the new First Lord

After consideration, Mr Balfour decided that the construction of one experimental machine should be proceeded with. One alone survived. But this proved to be the "Mother Tank"

which, displayed in Hatfield Park in January, 1916, became the exact model of the tanks which fought on the Somme in August, 1916, and was the parent and in principle the prototype of all the heavy tanks that fought in the Great War

* * * *



Photo Imperial War Museum

SINISTER AND AWE-INSPIRING

If events had so fallen out that sufficient time had been allowed to enable a large number of tanks to be assembled and unleashed upon the enemy before their existence was suspected it can hardly be doubted that a break-through on a wide front could have been achieved. The moral effect upon the enemy of this new weapon was great and a glance at the illustration shown here should convince most people of the sense of impotence likely to be felt by defending infantry when this slowly advancing mass of steel rolled over their parapet spitting flames and death to right and left.

Lord Dundonald
and his Grand-
father's Secret

The paragraph
in my letter of
January 5 to the
Prime Minister
upon the use of
smoke and the
reference to
secrets which lay
behind it, also
requires a di-
gression

Early in Sep-
tember, 1914,
Lieutenant-
General Lord
Dundonald, the
grandson of the
famous Admiral
Cochrane, spoke
to Lord Kit-
chener of various
plans left by
his ancestor for
making smoke
screens, and also
for driving an
enemy from his
position by
means of nox-
ious though not

necessarily deadly fumes "Lord Kit-
chener," writes Lord Dundonald, "at
once told me that he did not consider
that the plans were of any use for land
operations, and as they were invented
by an Admiral, I had better see the
Admiralty about them." Lord Dun-
donald therefore obtained an introduction
to the Second Sea Lord, Sir Frederick
Hamilton, with whom he had an inter-
view on September 28

The Second Sea Lord was generally
favourable, and wrote (September 29),
"I have talked the matter over with
Prince Louis and he thinks you had
better see Churchill and not mention
us." I had served in Lord Dundonald's
Brigade in South Africa during the
Relief of Ladysmith, and I at once made
an appointment to receive him. I was
immediately interested in his ideas, and

¹ Memorandum of the Earl of Dundonald
(Unpublished)

To the Imperial mind one sentence will

suffice

All fortifications, especially Marine

fortifications, can - under cover of dense smoke

be irresistibly subdued by fumes of sulphur,

knocked in through the embrasures of their

ramparts

Dundonald

"TO THE IMPERIAL MIND"

Facsimile of the writing in the hand of Admiral Cochrane Lord Dundonald,
which appeared upon the inner covering of the packet of papers referred
to on this page

asked to see the plans of the illustrious
Cochrane

He Reveals It

Lord Dundonald replied after a few
days' consideration that he felt that
the national emergency at last justified
him in revealing the secret which he
had guarded all his life, and in the
middle of October he brought me the
historic papers which once before, in
the Crimean War, had been placed at
the disposal of the British Government.
On the inner covering of the packet in
the delicate writing of the old Admiral,
were the words, "To the Imperial mind
one sentence will suffice. All fortifica-
tions, especially marine fortifications,
can under cover of dense smoke be
irresistibly subdued by fumes of sulphur
knocked in masses to windward of their
ramparts." The reader, captivated by
the compliment, will no doubt rise to



Photo Imperial War Museum

TAKEN IN ITS STRIDE

Trenches present little of difficulty to the modern tank. The caterpillar track upon which it travels enables it, slowly but surely, to climb into and over any obstacle likely to be encountered on a field of battle. It can enter a trench as shown above and bring enfilade fire to bear upon the defenders or, alternatively, it can cruise along on a line parallel with the trench crushing the parapet and mowing down the occupants. This photograph was taken during the battle of Cambrai on November 20, 1917 and shows a Mark IV tank in the German second line.

the occasion and grasp at once the full significance of the idea. I sent for the First Sea Lord (Prince Louis of Battenberg) without delay and we had a prolonged discussion.

I now cast about for means of exploring the subject without endangering its secrecy. In the first instance I had recourse to Sir Arthur Wilson, whose practical and inventive turn of mind seemed specially adapted to the task. The results were, however, negative. During the weeks that followed Lord Dundonald continued to send me admirable suggestions, based on his grandfather's ideas, and, after giving decisive instructions to make experiments, I continued to endeavour to secure in secrecy powerful professional endorsement. He wrote me in October —

The successful use of the plan above all depends on a favourable wind. The wind statistics from the coast of Holland to Berlin show that the wind

from [westerly directions] is far more prevalent than from the opposite or eastern section of the compass, especially is this so during November, December, January, and February.

The vehicles with sulphur would be conducted and operated by men in Gas-proof helmets.

An attack against miles of entrenchment would be made on sectional fronts by sulphur and smoke, the intervening blocks where

sulphur would not be employed being smoked only, in order to blind the hostile artillery.

There can be no question but that Lord Dundonald had grasped at this time the whole idea of gas and smoke warfare, and that he had derived it directly from the papers of his grandfather. To these conceptions modern chemistry offered terrible possibilities. The use of noxious or poisonous fumes was explicitly prohibited by International Law. We could not therefore employ it ourselves unless and until the enemy himself began. But when from time to time, amid the rush of the war, I turned my mind to this subject, and thought of German chemical science and German mentality, I became increasingly disquieted. As it was very difficult to obtain any high military or naval assistance, and I had not the life and strength to carry this additional load of thought myself, I turned to another

quarter In January I advised Lord Dundonald to lay his grandfather's scheme before Colonel Hankey, and on March 21 I ordered a strong technical Committee on the subject to be formed under the presidency of Lord Dundonald I made it clear, however, that we could not depart from the accepted Laws of War

Smoke

I kept in close touch with the work of the Committee Progress, even in the limited sphere to which we were confined by International Law and State Policy, was slow and fitful, but on April 10 I was able to write to Sir John French —

Mr Churchill to Sir John French

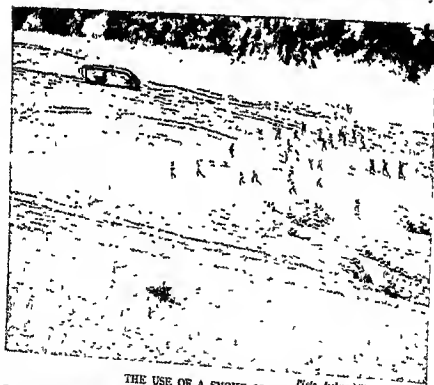
April 10, 1915

I have seen some wonderful smoke-making experiments carried out by my directions A light portable metal cone of the simplest construction, 3 feet high and 6 feet wide at the base, is fed by gravity at the base with benzol The oil spreads over the surface of the cone,

causing a dense smoke which you can turn off instantaneously by a tap on the fuel supply

I am developing this system for naval purposes, but my reflections lead me increasingly to believe in its importance in the kind of warfare you are now waging If the wind were favourable, you could blanket off absolutely in a few minutes a whole sector of the enemy's artillery and rifle fire You could use it to cut out a particular village or line of trenches till your men were actually upon them with the bayonet Or again you could cover the bringing up to the decisive point of a large mass of cavalry at the critical moment

On April 22, 1915, the Germans, violating the Law of War, made their first poison-gas attack, and the second battle of Ypres began This crime and folly was destined to expose them to severe retaliation from those who had the advantage of the prevailing winds, and in the end of the superior science, but who had hitherto been restrained by



THE USE OF A SMOKE SCREEN

Photo Imperial War Museum

The above photograph taken during the war in France shows infantry advancing under cover of a tank which is engaging the enemy with fire from its guns and at the same time providing a smoke screen The use of smoke has proved a valuable expedient By screening the advance of attacking troops on land or at sea the movements of ships, the enemy's fire is robbed of much of its accuracy and effect

respect for international usage from turning their favourable position to account

* * * *

The Conception of the Battle of Cambrai

There is one further stage in the tale of the Tanks to be described, and for this I must considerably anticipate chronology. When I resigned from the Cabinet in November, 1915, in circumstances which will be presently related, and joined the Army in France, I conceived myself to be the bearer to them of a good gift. This gift was the conception of a battle and of a victory, and I knew that the Commander-in-Chief, Sir John French, would study the proposals I submitted with deep and friendly attention. Accordingly on arrival at General Headquarters I drew up a paper dated December 3, called "Variants of the Offensive," which was printed for the Committee of Imperial Defence. I laid this before Sir John French, and later before his successor, Sir Douglas Haig. The first of these Variants may be quoted here.

Caterpillars

The cutting of the enemy's wire and the general domination of his firing-line can be effected by engines of this character. About seventy are now nearing completion in England, and should be inspected. None should be used until all can be used at once. They should be disposed secretly along the whole attacking front two or three hundred yards apart. Ten or fifteen minutes before the assault these engines should move forward over the best line of advance open, passing through or across our trenches at prepared points. They are capable of traversing any ordinary obstacle, ditch, breastwork, or trench. They carry two or three Maxims each and can be fitted with flame apparatus. Nothing but a direct hit from a field gun will stop them. On reaching the enemy's wire they turn to the left or right and run down parallel to the enemy's trench, sweeping his parapet with their fire, and crushing and cutting the barbed wire in lanes and in a slightly serpentine course. While doing this the Caterpillars will be so close to the enemy's line

that they will be immune from his artillery. Through the gaps thus made the shield-bearing infantry will advance.

*If artillery is used to cut wire, the direction and imminence of the attack is proclaimed days beforehand. But by this method the assault follows the wire-cutting almost immediately, i.e. before any reinforcements can be brought up by the enemy, or any special defensive measures taken.*¹

Surprise

4 The Caterpillars are capable of actually crossing the enemy's trench and advancing to cut his communication trenches, but into this aspect it is not necessary to go now. One step at a time. It will be easy, when the enemy's front line is in our hands, to find the best places for the Caterpillars to cross by for any further advance which may be required. They can climb any slope. They are, in short, movable machine-gun cupolas as well as wire-smashers. The naval torpedo-net-cutter, fixed in front of them with guides to lead the gathered wires into it, has proved absolutely successful. The spectacle of such a machine cutting wire entanglements has only to be witnessed to carry conviction. It resembles the reaping operations of a self-binder. Three or four days' notice to the Trench Warfare Department should enable this demonstration to be made.

5 It is obvious that the above form of attack requires, at the present season, frost, darkness, and surprise. The patty to the Caterpillar is either protective mining galleries, fougasses, buried shells, etc., or field guns concealed in the parapet. But if this trick works once, a new one can be devised for next time. Until these machines are actually in France, it is not possible to measure the full limit of their powers. But it is believed that during the dark hours of a winter's night not one but several successive lines of trenches could be taken by their agency. As they moved forward into the enemy's positions, his artillery would be increasingly hampered in firing at them, and, with deepening confusion, the location of and laying the guns upon these moving structures will

¹ The italics are new.

become almost impossible. Daylight would leave them an easy prey,¹ but if daylight witnessed an entirely new situation they would have done their part, even if they could not be withdrawn. They would, as they advanced, carry the infantry attack along with them and serve as movable *points d'appui*, guiding and defining the attack.

Premature Exposure of the Tanks

The scheme of attack by caterpillar vehicles thus unfolded was not put into operation until the first Battle of Cambrai in November, 1917. In the light of years of experience many errors can be detected in this forecast, but it might well have served as a basis for intense military study. Three months later, in February, 1916, Colonel Swinton, who was then serving on the Secretariat of the Committee of Imperial Defence, and had witnessed the early trials of "Mother Tank," set forth and printed in careful and accurate detail the plan of a Tank battle on a great scale. In spite of this it took the High Command nearly two whole years more to learn to use tanks in the manner and conditions for which they were originally conceived.

During the interval every conceivable mistake was committed, which lack of comprehension could suggest. The first twenty tanks, in spite of my protests and the far more potent objections of Mr. Asquith and Mr. Lloyd George, were providently exposed to the enemy at the Battle of the Somme. The immense advantage of novelty and surprise was thus squandered while the number of the tanks was small, while their condition was experimental and their crews almost untrained. This priceless conception, containing if used in its integrity and on a sufficient scale, the certainty of a great and brilliant victory, was revealed to the Germans for the mere petty purpose of taking a few ruined villages. Mercifully the high military authorities of all countries belonged to the same school of thought. The revelation passed unappreciated by the German Command. Though full of novelty and terror, the tank could no longer be an apparition, but at least we were not ourselves con-

¹ I underrated their immunity

fronted with German tanks in large numbers in 1917.

Their Mishandling by G. H. Q.

That year was to witness the further misuse of the British tank. Instead of employing them all at once in dry weather on ground not torn by bombardment, in some new sector where they could operate very easily and by surprise, they were plunged in fours and fives as a mere minor adjunct of the infantry into the quagmires and crater-fields of Paschendaele. The enemy was familiarized with them by their piecemeal use, and they themselves were brought wallowing to a standstill in the mud.

In spite of the reasoning of two years before and the steady appeals and arguments of the officers of the Tank Corps, it was not until Paschendaele was over that the tanks were given their chance. They were at last to have their own battle. They were at last to be allowed to show that they could destroy wire without a bombardment which would warn the enemy, and consequently restore the element of surprise to a modern offensive.

The Tanks Established

To General Byng fell the honour of organizing the Battle of Cambrai which began on November 20, 1917. Tardily and doubtingly as they were used, the results were decisive. In a few hours a victory was gained almost without loss. However, as no adequate preparations had been made to exploit it, the after consequences were disappointing, and even a few days later disastrous. It was not until 1918 that the combination of smoke with tanks, and the use of smoke to cover the advance of numbers of tanks, were actually adopted in the field. Had the war continued into 1919, every tank would have possessed the means of making its own smoke, and all tank operations would have been conducted under clouds of artificial fog. But after the Battle of Cambrai the fame of the tanks was secure, and henceforward throughout 1918 they became to the eyes of friend and foe alike the great decisive weapon and distinctive feature of the British, French and American offensives.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE CHOICE

Loss of the *Formidable*—The Russian Appeal—Lord Kitchener's Letters of January 2—Lord Fisher Inter. the Takt—A Consensus of Opinion—Telegrams to Vice Admiral Carden—Views of the Staff—Vice Admiral Carden's Plan January 11—Its Favourable Reception—The *Durra Ibrahim*—Negotiation with the French Government—Repositioning

THE New Year opened for the Admiralty under queer and stormy skies. Vice Admiral Buxty had been brought from the Grand Fleet to command the 5th Battle Squadron at the Nore and this squadron was to become the nucleus of a specially trained bombardment fleet, through which it was hoped to develop the means of a naval offensive.

The Admiralty came down from the north by home mail enquiring of a change which gave him a squadron of "Formidables" in place of the "Dreadnoughts" which he had commanded. Like most sailors his heart was with the Grand Fleet, but he addressed himself to his new work with his customary zeal. He sought permission from the Admiralty to take his squadron into the Channel for a cruise. He passed the Straits in daylight under flotilla escort arranged from the Admiralty and spent December 31 exercising off Portland. The flotilla after seeing him through the Straits left him at dusk to return to Dover, and no evil consequences had occurred during the daylight.

Loss of the *Formidable*

The ships turned westward down channel after dark and by 2 a.m. were approaching the Start. The wind and sea were rising, but the moon shone brightly. The speed was 10 knots and the course direct, not zigzag. A German submarine, cruising on the surface of the Channel, unobserved in the moonlight amid the dancing waves, fired a torpedo with fatal effect against the *Formidable*, the last ship of the line. In two hours and a half the vessel sank with the loss of Captain Lovley and over 500 officers

and men, the highest forms of discipline and devotion being observed by all ranks.

This melancholy news reached the Admiralty with the light of New Year's Day. Lord Fisher was indignant at the manner in which the squadron had been handled. The explanations which were demanded of the Admiral were not considered satisfactory by his naval chiefs. To my extreme regret, both on personal and on far wider grounds, it was decided to remove him from his command. I therefore appointed him to the control of Greenwich College, where he remained for some time.¹

The Russian Appeal

Various attempts were now made to survey the general situation and make plans for the spring. On January 1 the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Lloyd George, circulated a paper of the highest importance, drawing attention to the unfounded optimism which prevailed about the war situation, to the increasing failure of Russia as a prime factor and to the need for action in the Balkan Peninsula to rally Greece and Bulgaria to the cause of the Allies. There was also a pregnant and prescient Memorandum by Colonel Iankey, which is referred to in the Report of the Dardanelles Commission. Both these papers pointed to the Near East as the true field for our action and initiative in 1915. After reading advance copies of these documents I forwarded the latter on December 31 to the Prime Minister, saying—

"We are substantially in agreement,

¹ Vice Admiral Sir Lewis Buxty in the later years of the war, as is well known, fully vindicated the high qualities with which he had been credited.

and our conclusions are not incompatible

"I wanted Gallipoli attacked on the declaration of war. Meanwhile the difficulties have increased. I think the War Council ought to meet daily for a few days next week. No topic can be pursued to any fruitful result at weekly intervals."

Lord Kitchener's Letters of January 2

On January 2 I received the following letter from Lord Kitchener —

You have no doubt seen Buchanan's telegram about the Russians and Turks, if not Fitzgerald is taking it over.

Do you think any naval action would be possible to prevent [the] Turks sending more men into the Caucasus and thus denuding Constantinople?

With this note, Colonel Fitzgerald brought the telegram from which the following extract is relevant —

"Early this week the position of Russians in the Caucasus gave cause for grave anxiety, Turks having commenced enveloping movement seriously threatening Russian forces. Commander-in-Chief of the Army in the Caucasus pressed most urgently for reinforcements, many Caucasian troops being now employed against Germans, but Grand Duke has told him he must manage to keep on as he is."

"Grand Duke, however, asked if it would be possible for Lord Kitchener to arrange for a demonstration of some kind against Turks elsewhere, either naval or military, and to spread reports which would cause Turks, who he says are very liable to go off at a tangent, to withdraw some of the forces now acting against Russians in the Caucasus, and thus ease the position of Russians."

"Grand Duke added that, even if Lord Kitchener was unable to help, he should stick to his present plans."

Later in the day Lord Kitchener came over himself to see me at the Admiralty, and we had a full discussion on the Russian telegram and whether the Navy could do anything to help. All the possible alternatives in the Turkish theatre were mentioned. We both had

¹ The italics are mine

in mind our discussions of November on the possibilities of a descent from Egypt upon Gallipoli. We both saw clearly the far-reaching consequences of a successful attack upon Constantinople. If there was any prospect of a serious attempt to force the Straits of the Dardanelles at a later stage, it would be in the highest degree improvident to stir them up for the sake of a mere demonstration. I put this point forward, and suggested alternative diversions to help the Russians. Lord Kitchener did not dissent from the argument, but he returned steadily and decidedly to the statement that he had no troops to spare, and could not face a large new expansion of our military commitments. I have no record of this conversation, but my recollection of it is confirmed by the second letter which I received from Lord Kitchener on this same day (January 2).

Lord Kitchener to Mr Churchill

January 2, 1915

I do not see that we can do anything that will very seriously help the Russians in the Caucasus.

The Turks are evidently withdrawing most of their troops from Adrianople and using them to reinforce their army against Russia, probably sending them by the Black Sea.

In the Caucasus and Northern Persia the Russians are in a bad way.

We have no troops to land anywhere. A demonstration at Smyrna would do no good and probably cause the slaughter of Christians. Alexandretta has already been tried, and would have no great effect a second time. The coast of Syria would have no effect. The only place that a demonstration might have some effect in stopping reinforcements going East would be the Dardanelles. Particularly if, as the Grand Duke says, reports could be spread at the same time that Constantinople was threatened.

We shall not be ready for anything big for some months.

On the same day Lord Kitchener, as the result no doubt of the conversation which he had had with me, sent through the Foreign Office the following telegram to Petrograd —

"Please assure the Grand Duke that

steps will be taken to make a demonstration against the Turks. It is, however, feared that any action we can devise and carry out will be unlikely to seriously affect numbers of enemy in the Caucasus, or cause their withdrawal."

This telegram committed us to a demonstration against the Turks of some kind or another, but it did not commit us in respect of its direction, character or scope. It was the least that could have been said in answer to a request of a hard-pressed ally.

Lord Fisher enters the field

The next morning (January 3) Lord Fisher entered the field. He had been considering all these matters, had read the various Cabinet papers and the Russian telegram, and had full knowledge of my conversation with Lord Kitchener. The letter which he now sent me is of great importance. It

reveals Lord Fisher's position fully and clearly. The turbulence of its style in no way affects the shrewdness and profundity of its vision. I do not think that Lord Fisher ever took any action or expressed any opinions which were irreconcilable with the general principles of these first thoughts. He was always in favour of a great scheme against the Turks and to rally the Balkans. He always believed that Bulgaria was the key to the situation in this quarter. He was always prepared to risk the old battleships as part of a large naval, military and diplomatic combination. In all this we were, as his letter shows, in entire agreement. That these large schemes were not carried into effect was not his fault nor mine.

January 3, 1915

DEAR WINSTON,—

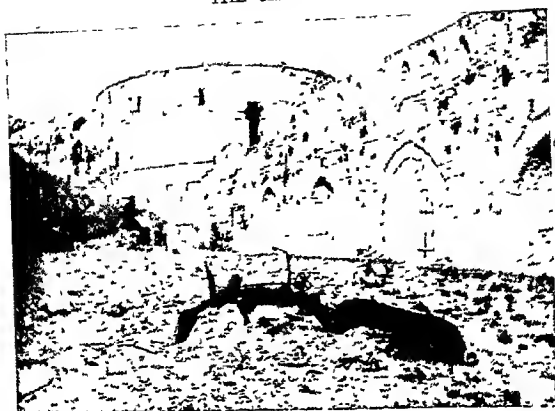
I've been informed by Hankey that War Council assembles next Thursday,



116. Imperial War Museum

KILIT BAHR FROM THE STRAITS

A general view of Kilit Bahr, one of the fortified points on the Gallipoli Peninsula. The ace of clubs fort of which in aerial view was given on page 467 is seen on the left of the photograph. The Kilit Bahr plateau rises to a height of 700 feet and the fort commands the Strait which at this point is only three quarters of a mile wide.



SEDD EL-BAHR

The Field

The old fort at Sedd el Bahr marks the spot near which the gallant men of the Dublin and Munster Fusiliers and the Hampshire Regiment landed from the *River Clyde* on April 25, 1915. Known for the purposes of the landing as "V" Beach this strip of sand was the scene of some of the most heroic episodes of the Gallipoli campaign. The landing was an epic. That it was ever accomplished at all was little short of a miracle.

and I suppose it will be like a game of ninepins! Everyone will have a plan, and one ninepin in falling will knock over its neighbour! I CONSIDER THE ATTACK ON TURKEY HOLDS THE FIELD! —but ONLY if it's IMMEDIATE! However, it won't be! Our Aulic Council will adjourn till the following Thursday fortnight! (N.B. *When did we meet last and what came of it???*)

We shall decide on a futile bombardment of the Dardanelles which wears out the irreplaceable guns of the *Indefatigable* which probably will require replacement. What good resulted from the last bombardment? Did it move a single Turk from the Caucasus? And so the war goes on! You want ONE man!

This is the Torkey plan —

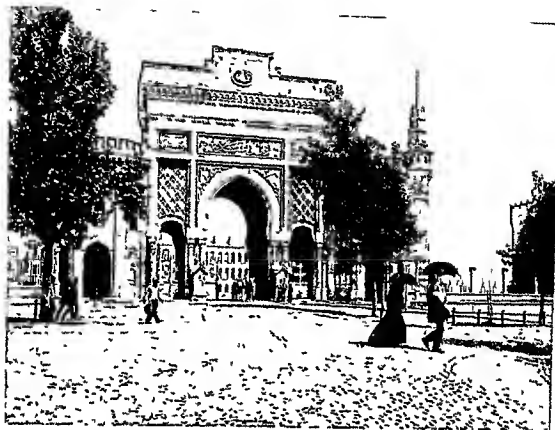
I Appoint Sir W. Robertson the present Quartermaster-General to command the Expeditionary Force

II Immediately replace all Indians and 75,000 seasoned troops from Sir John French's command with Territorials, etc., from England (as you

yourself suggested) and embark this Turkish Expeditionary Force ostensibly for protection of Egypt! WITH ALL POSSIBLE DESPATCH at *Marseilles*! and land them at Besika Bay direct with previous intents before they arrive with troops now in Egypt against Haifa and Alexandretta, the latter to be a REAL occupation because of its inestimable value as regards the oil fields of the Garden of Eden, with which by rail it is in direct communication, and we shove out the Germans now established at Alexandretta with an immense Turkish concession—the last act of that arch-enemy of England, Marschall von Bieberstein!

III The Greeks to go for Gallipoli at the same time as we go for Besika, and the Bulgarians for Constantinople, and the Russians, the Servians, and Roumanians for Austria (*all this you said yourself!*)

IV Sturdee forces the Dardanelles at the same time with "Majestic" class and "Canopus" class! God bless him!



ADRIANOPLE GATE AND WAR OFFICE CONSTANTINOPLE

Photo I.N.A.

Constantinople boasts of many fine buildings and in 1914 the city was reputed to contain over eight hundred mosques. Rich in remains of Greek architecture Constantinople's heritage from ancient Byzantium, the place is at once one of the pleasantest and most interesting in Europe. The photograph reproduced above shows the Adrianople Gate and, in the background the Turkish War Office.

But as the great Napoleon said, "CELERITY"—without it—"FAILURE"!

In the history of the world—a Junta has never won! You want *one man*!

Yours,

F

A Consensus of Opinion

There never was the slightest chance of the whole of the Fisher plan being carried into effect. Sir William Robertson, to whom he proposed to entrust it, would presumably have advised strongly against it, his policy being concentration in the main, or, as he would no doubt have described it, the decisive theatre. The withdrawal of the Indian Corps and 75,000 seasoned troops from Sir John French's command and their replacement by Territorial Divisions would have been resisted to the point of resignation by the Commander-in-Chief, supported by his whole staff. General Joffre and the French Government would have

protested in a decisive manner. Lord Fisher's third paragraph about the Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbians and Roumanians expressed exactly what everybody wanted. It was the obvious supreme objective in this part of the world. The question was, How to procure it? This was the root of the matter. It was in connection with this that Lord Fisher's fourth paragraph made its impression upon me. Here for the first time was the suggestion of forcing the Dardanelles with the old battleships.

This series of weighty representations had the effect of making me move. I thought I saw a great convergence of opinion in the direction of that attack upon the Dardanelles which I had always so greatly desired. The arguments in its favour were overwhelming. And now the highest authorities, political, naval and military, were apparently ready to put their shoulders to the wheel. All

Mr Lloyd George's advocacy and influence seemed about to be cast in the direction of Turkey and the Balkans. Though his method was different, the ultimate object, namely, the rallying of the Balkan States against Austria and Turkey, was the same, and all his arguments applied equally to either method.

I knew from my talks with Mr Balfour that he too was profoundly impressed by the advantages which might be reaped by successful action in this south-eastern theatre. Lastly, the Foreign Office and Sir Edward Grey were, of course, keenly interested. Here was a great consensus of opinion. Here it seemed at last was a sufficient impulse and unity for action.

Telegrams to Vice-Admiral Carden

But was there a practicable scheme? Thus I determined to find out, and on January 3, with the active agreement of Lord Fisher and after a talk with Sir Henry Jackson who was specially studying this theatre and advising us thereupon, I telegraphed to Vice-Admiral Carden, commanding at the Dardanelles, as follows —

Admiralty to Vice-Admiral Carden

January 3, 1915

From First Lord

Do you consider the forcing of the Dardanelles by ships alone a practicable operation?

It is assumed older battleships fitted with mine-bumpers would be used, preceded by colliers or other merchant craft as mine-bumpers and sweepers.

Importance of results would justify severe loss.

Let me know your views.

All this was purely exploratory. I did not commit myself at this stage even to the general principle of an attack upon Turkey. I wanted to see the alternatives weighed and to see what support such projects would in fact command.

All our affairs at this time were complicated with plans which were under discussion for the advance of the Army along the coast and for the closing up of Zeebrugge.

I was still thinking a great deal of the northern theatre, of Borkum and of the Baltic. "We had better," I wrote on January 4 in a note to the First Sea Lord on various points that would come up for discussion at the War Council the next day, "hear what others have to say about the Turkish plans before taking a decided line. I would not grudge 100,000 men, because of the great political effects in the Balkan Peninsula."



Photo Lafayette

ADMIRAL SIR SACKVILLE CARDEN

At the outbreak of the Great War Vice-Admiral Carden as he then was was superintendent of the Dockyard at Malta. On September 21 of that year he was appointed by the Admiralty to command the squadron off the Dardanelles. He carried out the preliminary operations against the Turks in this theatre until March 1915 when he resigned for reasons of ill health.

"The naval advantages," he replied the same day, "of the possession of Constantinople and the getting of wheat from the Black Sea are so overwhelming that I consider Colonel Hankey's plan for Turkish operations vital and imperative and very pressing"¹

There is no doubt we could have worked together unitedly and with the utmost enthusiasm for the southern amphibious plan, if it had been pressed forward by the War Council on a great scale and with the necessary drive and decision

On January 5 the answer from Admiral Carden arrived. It was remarkable

Vice-Admiral Carden to First Lord

January 5, 1915

With reference to your telegram of 3rd instant, I do not consider Dardanelles can be rushed

They might be forced by extended operations with large number of ships

Views of the Staff

At the War Council that afternoon the question of an attack on Turkey and a diversion in the Near East was one of the principal subjects discussed. Everyone seemed alive to all its advantages, and Admiral Carden's telegram, which I read out, was heard with extreme interest. Its significance lay in the fact that it offered a prospect of influencing the eastern situation in a decisive manner without opening a new military commitment on a large scale, and further it afforded an effective means of helping the Grand Duke without wasting the Dardanelles possibilities upon nothing more than a demonstration

On my return to the Admiralty I found that the idea of a gradual forcing of the Straits by extended operations was reviewed with favour both by Admiral Oliver, the Chief of the Staff, and by Sir Henry Jackson. I had a conversation with Sir Henry Jackson, who had that day completed a memorandum upon the question (which I read some days later). Sir Henry Jackson deprecated any attempt to rush the Straits, but he spoke of the considerable effects of the brief

¹ The word "plan" is hardly correct. Colonel Hankey had presented a general appreciation upon the importance of the Turkish theatre

bombardment of November 3, and he was attracted by the idea of a step-by-step reduction of the fortresses, though troops would be needed to follow up and complete the naval attack and especially to occupy Constantinople. So here we had the Chief of the Staff, the Admiral studying this particular theatre, and the Admiral in command, all apparently in general accord in principle. This coincidence of opinion in officers so widely separated and so differently circumstanced impressed me very much, and I therefore telegraphed on January 6 to Vice-Admiral Carden as follows —

First Lord to Admiral Carden

January 6, 1915

Your view is agreed with by high authorities here. Please telegraph in detail what you think could be done by extended operations, what force would be needed, and how you consider it should be used

There was another meeting of the War Council on January 8 and prolonged discussion of the eastern theatre. Dealing with the various alternatives, Lord Kitchener expressed an opinion in favour of an attack on the Dardanelles. He told the Council that the Dardanelles appeared to be the most suitable military objective, as an attack there could be made in co-operation with the Fleet. He estimated that 150,000 men would be sufficient for the capture of the Dardanelles, but reserved his final opinion until a close study had been made. He offered no troops and made it clear that none were available. His contribution was therefore, and was intended to be, purely theoretic

Vice-Admiral Carden's Plan, January 11

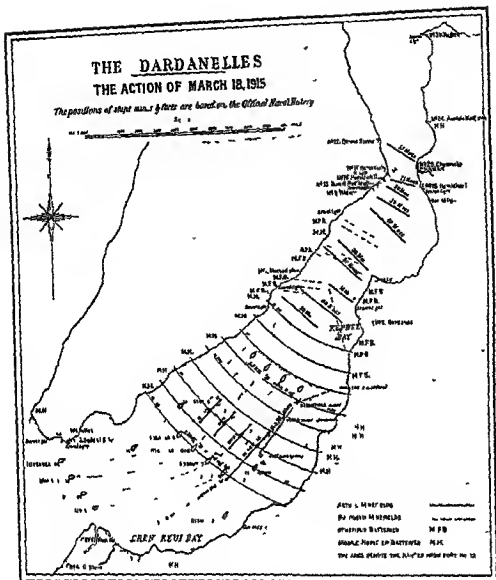
On January 11 arrived the detailed Carden plan.¹ It was in its details largely the work of an very able officer of Marines—Captain Godfrey (who was one of the Vice-Admiral's Staff)—and of the gunnery experts of the *Inflexible*. I set it out in all essentials

Possibility of operations —

(A) Total reduction of defences at the entrance

(B) Clear defences inside of Straits

¹ See map of Dardanelles facing page 534



THE DARDANELLES

Accurate plan of the Straits of the Dardanelles showing the positions of ships, mines and forts at the time of the action of March 18, 1915, based upon data contained in the Official Naval History.

up to and including Kephez Point
Battery No 8

(C) Reduction of defences at the Narrows, Chanak

(D) Clear passage through minefield, advancing through Narrows, reducing forts above Narrows, and final advance to Marmora

Force required, 12 battleships, of which 4 fitted with mine-bumpers. Three battle-cruisers—2 should be available on entering Marmora—3 light cruisers, 1 flotilla leader, 16 destroyers, 1 depot repairing ship, 6 submarines, 4 seaplanes and the *Foudre*, 12 mine-

sweepers, including, perhaps, 4 fleet sweepers, 1 hospital ship, 6 colliers at Tenedos Island, 2 supply and ammunition ships. The above force allows for casualties.

Details of action —

Frequent reconnaissance by seaplanes indispensable

(A) Indirect bombardment of forts, reduction completed by direct bombardment at decisive range, torpedo tubes at the entrance and guns commanding minefield destroyed, minefield cleared

(B) Battleships, preceded by minesweepers, enter Straits, working way up

till position reached from which battery No 8 can be silenced

(C) Severe bombardment of forts by battle-cruisers from Gaba Tepe spotted from battleships, reduction completed by direct fire at decisive range

(D) Battleships, preceded by sweepers, making way up towards Narrows. Ports 22, 23, 24 first bombarded from Gaba Tepe, spotting for 22 by seaplanes, then direct fire. Sweep minefields in Narrows, the fort at Nagara reduced by direct fire, battle force proceeds to Marmora preceded by mine-sweepers

Expenditure on ammunition for (C) would be large, but if supplies sufficient, result should be successful. Difficulty as to (B) greatly increased if *Goeben* assisting defence from Nagara. It would, unless submarine attacks successful, necessitate employment of battle-cruisers from Gaba Tepe or direct

Time required for operations depends greatly on *moral* of enemy under bombardment, garrison largely stiffened by the Germans, also on the weather conditions. Gales now frequent. Might do it all in a month about

Expenditure of ammunition would be large. Approximate estimate of quantity required being prepared

Disposition of squadron on completion of operations. Marmora, 2 battle-cruisers, 4 battleships, 3 light cruisers, 1 flotilla leader, 12 torpedo-boat destroyers, 3 submarines, 1 supply and ammunition ship, 4 mine-sweepers, collier

Remainder of force keeping Straits open and covering mine-sweepers completing clearing minefield

Its Favourable Reception

This plan produced a great impression upon everyone who saw it. It was to me in its details an entirely novel proposition. My telegram had contemplated something in the nature of an organized "rush" in accordance with Lord Fisher's suggestion about Admiral Sturdee forcing the Straits with the "Canopus" class of battleships. I sent a copy of the plan at once to the Prime Minister and some others, and it was freely discussed among those who were informed. Both the First Sea Lord and

the Chief of the Staff seemed favourable to it. No one at any time threw the slightest doubt upon its technical soundness. No one, for instance, of the four or five great naval authorities each with his technical staff who were privy said, "This is absurd. Ships cannot fight forts," or criticized its details. On the contrary, they all treated it as an extremely interesting and hopeful proposal, and there grew up in the secret circles of the Admiralty a perfectly clear opinion favourable to the operation. It was then that the War Staff made a suggestion which certainly greatly affected the issue.

The *Queen Elizabeth*

The *Queen Elizabeth*, the first in order of the five fast battleships armed with 15-inch guns, was now ready. It had been decided to send her to fire her gunnery trials and calibration exercises in the safe, calm waters of the Mediterranean. She was actually under orders to proceed thither. The Staff now proposed that she should test her enormous guns against the Dardanelles and pointed out that she could fire at ranges far outside those of the Turkish forts. This had not occurred to me before. But the moment it was mentioned, its importance was apparent. We all felt ourselves in the presence of a new fact. Moreover, the *Queen Elizabeth* came into the argument with a cumulative effect. Vice-Admiral Carden had never dreamed of having her. Our previous discussions and his detailed plan had ignored any help that she might give.

* * * *

I now called for definite plans and orders to be worked out by the Staff, and I outlined the Fleet that was evidently available for the operation.

Secretary

First Sea Lord

Chief of Staff

January 12

(1) The forcing of the Dardanelles as proposed, and the arrival of a squadron strong enough to defeat the Turkish Fleet in the Sea of Marmora, would be a victory of first importance, and change

to our advantage the whole situation of the war in the East

(2) It would appear possible to provide the force required by Admiral Carden without weakening the margins necessary in Home waters, as follows —

Ocean, Swiftsure and Triumph (already in or assigned to this theatre)

Vengeance, Canopus (from the Atlantic)

Albion (from the Cape)

Cæsar and *Prince George* (from Gibraltar)

Victorious, Mars, Magnificent, Hannibal (already ordered to be dismantled at home)

Queen Elizabeth (detained for gunnery preparation at Gibraltar)

Inflexible (ordered to Mediterranean to relieve *Indefatigable*)

Indefatigable (already on the spot)

Thus no capital ship would be ordered from Home waters, except four already ordered to be dismantled

(3) The above takes no account of four French battleships on the spot, and six others reported available

(4) Operations could begin on February 1, by long-range fire from *Queen Elizabeth* on forts at the entrance. It is not necessary to develop the full attack until the effect of the first stage of the operation has become apparent. All arrangements should be secretly concerted for carrying the plan through, the seaplanes and ancillary craft being provided. Admiral Carden to command.

Definite plans should be worked out accordingly

W S C

Lord Fisher approved this minute, and himself at a later date (February 9) added to the proposed fleet the two quasi-Dreadnought battleships, the *Lord Nelson* and the *Agamemnon*. This was a great reinforcement, and involved a diminution to that extent in the margin of the Grand Fleet.

On January 13 I brought the project before the War Council. I circulated Admiral Carden's telegram twenty-four hours beforehand to its principal members, including, of course, the Prime Minister and Lord Kitchener. Lord Kitchener thought the plan was worth

trying. "We could leave off the bombardment," he said, "if it did not prove effective." Lord Fisher and Sir Arthur Wilson were both present. Neither made any remark, and I certainly thought that they agreed. The decision of the Council was unanimous, and was recorded in the following curious form —

"That the Admiralty should consider promptly the possibility of effective action in the Adriatic at Cattaro or elsewhere—with a view (*inter alia*) of bringing pressure on Italy."

"That the Admiralty should also prepare for a naval expedition in February, to bombard and take the Gallipoli Peninsula with Constantinople as its objective."

After the Council I sent the following telegram on January 15 with Lord Fisher's concurrence to Admiral Carden.

Your scheme was laid by the First Sea Lord and myself before the Cabinet War Council yesterday, and was approved in principle.

We see no difficulty in providing the force you require, including the *Queen Elizabeth*, by February 15.

We entirely agree with your plan of methodical piecemeal reduction of forts as the Germans did at Antwerp.

We propose to entrust this operation to you.

Admiral de Robeck will probably be your second in command.

The sooner we can begin the better. You will shortly receive the official instructions of the Board.

Continue to perfect your plan.

* * * *

Negotiation with the French Government.

I now proceeded to open the matter to the French Government, with whom among other things the question of the command in the Mediterranean required readjustment.

I outlined our plan for forcing the Dardanelles and added —

The Admiralty do not wish, in view of this very important operation, that any change in the local command in that portion of the Mediterranean should be made at the present time. They hope, however, that the squadron of French

battleships, together with the French submarines and destroyers and the seaplane ship *Foudre*, will co-operate under a French rear-admiral

Before handing this note to the French naval attaché I took care to have the draft formally countersigned by the Prime Minister, Lord Kitchener, and Sir Edward Grey, as well as by the First Sea Lord and the Chief of the Staff. This precaution was appropriate to a matter of grave importance, about which it was essential there should be no subsequent misunderstanding.

I made a similar communication to the Grand Duke Nicholas.

Responsibilities

It will be seen that the genesis of this plan and its elaboration were purely naval and professional in their character. It was Admiral Carden and his staff gunnery officers who proposed the gradual method of piecemeal reduction by long-range bombardment. It was Sir Henry Jackson and the Admiralty staff who embraced this idea and studied and approved its detail. Right or wrong, it was a Service plan. Similarly the Admiralty orders were prepared exclusively by the Chief of the Staff and his assistants. I outlined the resources at our disposal in the old battleships. But it was the staff who proposed the addition of the *Queen Elizabeth*, with all the possibilities that that ship opened out. It was the First Sea Lord who added the other two most powerful vessels, the *Lord Nelson* and the *Agamemnon*, to the Dardanelles Fleet. At no point did lay or civilian interference mingle with or mar the integrity of a professional conception.

I write this not in the slightest degree to minimize or shift my own responsibility. But this was not where it lay.

I did not and I could not make the plan. But when it had been made by the naval authorities, and fashioned and endorsed by high technical authorities and approved by the First Sea Lord, I seized upon it and set it on the path of action, and thereafter espoused it with all my resources. When others weakened or changed their opinion without adducing new reasons, I held them strongly to their previous decisions, and so in view of the general interest of the Allies, thrust the business steadily forward into actual experiment.

* * * *

Thus is completed the account of the first phase in the initiation of the enterprise against the Dardanelles. There can be very little dispute about the facts in the face of the documents. For twenty days the project has been under discussion among the leading naval authorities of the day, and among the members of the War Council. At the Admiralty it has been the question most debated in our secret circle. So far all opinions are favourable. So far no voice has been raised and no argument advanced against it. The writer of the Australian official history has thought it right to epitomize the story in the following concluding sentence --

"So through a Churchill's excess of imagination, a layman's ignorance of artillery, and the fatal power of a young enthusiasm to convince older and slower brains, the tragedy of Gallipoli was born."

It is my hope that the Australian people, towards whom I have always felt a solemn responsibility, will not rest content with so crude, so inaccurate, so incomplete and so prejudiced a judgment, but will study the facts for themselves.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE ACTION OF THE DOGGER BANK

Naval Uneasiness—Proposal to Withdraw the Battle-Cruisers from the Forth—Minutes—The Prime Minister's Request—Proposed Visit of Sir John Jellicoe to London—The Prime Minister Agrees—German Deliberations—Sir Arthur Wilson's News—Fixing the British Rendezvous—Lord Fisher concurs—Suspense—Daybreak at the Admiralty—Progress of the Action—Daybreak on the Dogger Bank—Contact with the Enemy—The *Lion* opens Fire—German Concentration against the *Lion*—The *Lion* crippled—Rear-Admiral Moore in Command—The Sinking of the *Blucher*—Severe Tests—Disappointment in Victory—My Letter to the Prime Minister of January 24—Proposal to Base the Grand Fleet on the Forth—My Letter to Sir John Jellicoe of January 26—Effects of the Victory at Home and Abroad

DURING the middle of January uneasiness about our naval situation manifested itself in the high and secret circles of the Government

Naval Uneasiness

Sir John Jellicoe has described in his book what he considered the exceptional weakness of the Grand Fleet at this juncture. His letters to the First Sea Lord were filled with disquieting computations of the relative strength of the British and German navies in the event of a great battle. Several of his Dreadnoughts were undergoing their normal refits, and two more, the *Monarch* and the *Conqueror*, were temporarily disabled by a collision. He returned to the theory which he had developed in the preceding November, that the Germans had secretly armed their latest battleships with much heavier guns. But whereas in November the suggestion had been that four ships were now armed with 14-inch guns, it had by this time grown to six ships and 15-inch guns. There was of course no possibility of such a transformation having taken place. Our Intelligence had secured us identifications of these vessels out of dock and in movement at various dates which made it unbelievable that such enormous reconstructions could have been accomplished. I was, however, forced to combat these arguments and others equally alarming in character, and in particular to set up a Committee

under the Third Sea Lord to allay the apprehension that this great re-armament had taken place.¹

Proposal to Withdraw the Battle-cruisers from the Forth—Minutes

Another request of the Commander-in-Chief caused me much embarrassment. He showed himself extremely anxious that the battle-cruisers which had been stationed at the Forth should be withdrawn to Cromarty in order to be in closer relation with the main Fleet. This proposal, if acceded to, would have deprived us of the means of acting with any effect against a German raid upon our coasts, should the enemy repeat the experiment which he had tried on December 16 against Hartlepool and Scarborough. Cromarty was as far from Heligoland as Scapa, and the withdrawal of Admiral Beatty and the battle-cruisers to this remote station seemed to involve us in unnecessary helplessness. I would have preferred indeed that the whole Battle Fleet should come south to the Forth. But if this could not yet be achieved, I strongly objected to the battle-cruisers being withdrawn from strategic relation with the enemy's fast vessels. I therefore minuted to the First Sea Lord on January 20

The battle-cruisers ought to be kept together, as then we shall always have

See Appendix



ADMIRAL SIR ARTHUR WILSON

One of the distinguished men who rendered signal services to their country on Admiralty duty. Sir Arthur Wilson is the subject of frequent mention in the course of the naval side of Mr Churchill's narrative. This fine sailor had a notable record of service ashore and afloat. He won the Victoria Cross at El Teb on February 29, 1884.

a force strong enough to beat the whole of the German fast vessels. They will be quite out of reach for any action to protect the coasts of England if they go to Cromarty, which is the same distance from Heligoland as Scapa. I therefore think they should not be divided or moved from the Forth, unless Admiral Beatty reports that he finds the navigational conditions dangerous. The outer line defences of the Forth are now nearly completed. There is a considerable force of trawlers, torpedo boats and submarines there under the direction of Admiral Lowry, who has shown himself to be a most energetic and capable officer. I see no reason why they should

be mined in there more than at Cromarty, and in any case they ought never to proceed to sea without the channels being properly swept beforehand. There is good seaplane protection at the Forth, which can be reinforced if necessary.

W S C

I discussed this question and other matters connected with the strength of the Grand Fleet with Lord Fisher fully the next morning, and he agreed to the view which I took. I therefore minutely to the Chief of the Staff, on the afternoon of the 21st.

The battle-cruisers should be kept together at the Forth as at present, unless Admiral Beatty reports that he finds the navigational conditions dangerous. Action accordingly.

W S C

The Prime Minister's Request

The repercussion of these misgivings manifested itself in the War Council, and on January 21 the Prime Minister wrote informing me that he was summoning a meeting of

the War Council for the 28th and that he desired that Sir John Jellicoe should be invited to be present. I became conscious that adverse currents were once more flowing around the Admiralty. I did not think that it was right to bring Sir John Jellicoe away from his fleet to London in order to attend a War Council during a period admittedly one of stringency in our own strength, and during which from every indication enemy activity might well be expected. I therefore decided to resist to the best of my ability the summoning of Sir John Jellicoe to London, and having obtained Lord Fisher's agreement I wrote on January 22 the following letter —

Mr Churchill to Mr Asquith
January 22, 1915

There is no similarity between the position and functions of a naval Commander-in-Chief and of a modern General in the field. Military operations take a long time to develop and to carry through. The situation changes by gradations. The directions from the commanding General are given by telegraph or telephone. The larger the army the less direct is his contact with it, and the longer are the phases of every operation. With the Fleet, on the other hand, it is nothing or everything. The Grand Fleet has always been kept at four hours' notice to proceed to sea. Sir John Jellicoe, in the letter which I read to you, expresses the opinion that he ought not to be more than two hours away from his flagship even during the short period of rest we have pressed him to take. At any moment news may arrive which will require the whole fleet to proceed to sea immediately.

The leadership of a fleet is personal in a sense and degree quite different from that of a large modern army. It all moves in one body in a strict drill formation, and the Admiral gives with his own lips the actual executive words which regulate its attack upon the enemy.

Proposed Visit of Sir John Jellicoe to London

When Lord Fisher became First Sea Lord the matters to be discussed were so serious that we took the extraordinary step of inviting Sir John Jellicoe to come south to consult with us. This was before the Germans had attempted any raid upon our coast, and after a long period of complete passivity on their



Photo: Knoll

ADMIRAL SIR HENRY OLIVER

Admiral Sir Henry Oliver like Admiral Sir Arthur Wilson was an officer of great experience and ability. He was appointed Naval Secretary to the First Lord of the Admiralty at an early stage of the war, and in November of that year became Chief of the Staff. During the anxious months of 1914 and 1915 when the strain upon those responsible for the conduct of the war on the seas was at its greatest Oliver was responsible for and carried out with constancy duties of the most onerous nature.

part. Before he could return to his flagship, the enemy made their abortive attack on Yarmouth. The whole fleet was sent to sea without the flagship, and if the enemy had intended a decisive operation, either the opportunity of bringing him to action would have been missed, or the decisive battle of the war would have been fought without the Commander-in-Chief. In consequence of this experience, we arranged that if any further consultation was necessary, we should go up to him and not bring him down to us. There have already been

two alarms in the last month. The 27th is the Emperor's birthday, and it is quite possible that something may be attempted then.

In these circumstances, I do not feel justified in telegraphing to Sir John Jellicoe saying, "If you think you can get away, do so." He knows perfectly well that he ought not to leave, and we know well that we ought not to direct him to leave, unless there is a graver military need for his presence here than there is for his presence with the fleet.

I should be, of course, quite ready to arrange for you or Mr Balfour or Lord Kitchener to visit Sir John Jellicoe and discuss with him any and every aspect of the naval war. We believe that complete unity of thought on the main strategy exists between him and the Admiralty. The most intimate relations of personal friendship prevail between Sir John Jellicoe and the First Sea Lord, they write to each other every day, and sometimes several times a day. I know of no reason, either personal or of policy, which requires external intervention,

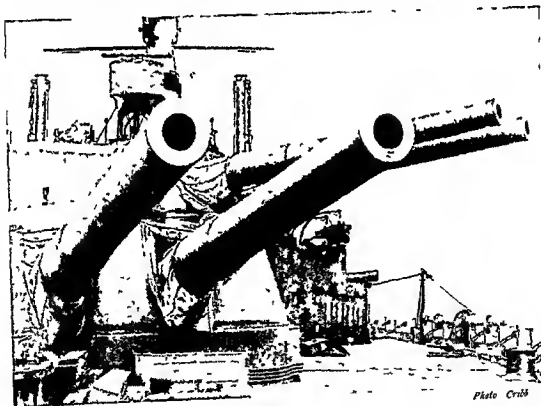
but if such intervention were necessary, it would be much more in accordance with the public interest and safety that members of the War Council should visit Sir John Jellicoe than that he should be brought down here.

The First Sea Lord desires me to say that these views have his full agreement.

I must point out also that the Admiralty is not merely an administrative Department, but is actually carrying on the war, and that orders are being issued constantly from this Office to ships and squadrons in immediate contact with the enemy. At this present time three separate operations, two of a very serious nature, are being prepared by us and are imminent. I hope, therefore, that we may continue to be sustained by your full confidence, which has helped us to achieve satisfactory results in the first six months of the war.

The Prime Minister Agrees— German Deliberations

I sent this letter over to Mr Asquith on the same morning by my Naval



GUNS OF HMS AJAX

A close up view of the exterior of gun-turrets on HMS Ajax, showing the guns trained. The modern turret is an armoured structure under cover of which gun crews work. It is capable of being moved round by means of hydraulic or electrical power in order that the guns may be kept bearing on their target.

Photo Credit

Secretary, Commodore de Bartolomé. This officer, who knew all the facts and was capable of explaining them with the utmost lucidity and tact, succeeded in re-assuring the Prime Minister, and returned an hour later to the Admiralty with this satisfactory news

* * *

We have seen the nature of the discussions which proceeded between the German naval staff and the Emperor, and the rigorous restrictions which had been imposed upon the German Fleet. In consequence of these Imperial decisions, Admiral von Ingenohl arranged to send his most powerful battle squadron, the Third, consisting of the "Kaisers" and the "Königs," into the Baltic for training. He intended, however, that there should first be another enterprise of a limited character by the Fleet in the North Sea.

Owing to bad weather this enterprise was postponed from day to day.

Towards the middle of January he and the German naval staff led themselves to believe that a great British naval offensive was imminent. They had heard about the dummy warships which were being constructed in Belfast, and they connected these with a plan for running block ships into the river mouths of the Helgoland Bight. They passed some days in a fever heat of excitement and at a high pitch of readiness.

On the morning of the 19th a German seaplane, sixty miles out from Helgoland, sighted "numerous English ships bound upon an easterly course, among them several battle-cruisers and close upon a hundred small craft." This then they thought was the great blocking operation. It was, in fact, a reconnaissance in force by the Harwich destroyer and submarine flotillas supported by the battle-cruisers. When nothing happened and later reports showed the Germans that a large part of the British Fleet had approached their coast and had then retired, von Ingenohl concluded that the blocking operation had been abandoned or at any rate postponed. He proceeded forthwith on the 20th to relax his



Photo "Daily Mirror"

HIDDEN DEATH

Mines rising at anchor below the surface of the sea, were responsible for the loss of many a fine ship during the years of the Great War. Here, one of these deadly weapons, having been found adrift, has just been exploded by means of a rifle bullet.

special precautions, and on the 21st sent the Third Squadron through the Kiel Canal for their exercises in the Baltic. The contradictory and inconsequent decisions which followed are sourly described in the German Official History.

"After this general relaxation of the state of readiness it would have been quite natural if, in accordance with the guiding lines laid down in the Commander-in-Chief's report and in his war diary, he had now shown still less initiative than before as regards offensive operations in the North Sea. But the weather improved just at this time, and Vice-Admiral Eckerman, the Chief of Staff, wanted to take the opportunity of making up for inactivity during the bad weather. Accordingly on January 22

he submitted the following suggestions to the Commander-in-Chief in writing —

"If the weather to-morrow remains as it has been this afternoon and evening, a cruiser and destroyer advance to the Dogger Bank would in my opinion be very advisable. No special preparations are needed, an order issued to-morrow morning to the Senior Officer, Scouting Forces, would be sufficient.

"Proceed out at night, arrive in the forenoon, return in the evening."

"Admiral von Ingenohl," says the German historian, "at once realized that this proposal was in contradiction to the guiding lines just laid down, and he made the following marginal note —

"I should prefer it if such advances were made only when the Fleet can proceed in company. Unfortunately this is impossible at the moment."

Nevertheless he gave his consent.

"At 10.25 the next morning the following order was sent to Rear-Admiral von Hipper by Wireless Telegraphy —

"First and Second Scouting Groups, Senior Officer of Destroyers and two flotillas to be selected by the Senior Officer Scouting Forces are to reconnoitre the Dogger Bank. They are to leave harbour this evening after dark and to return to-morrow evening after dark."

* * * *

Sir Arthur Wilson's News

On the 23rd Lord Fisher, who in spite of several divergences of view which will be dealt with later, had been very staunch and good to me over the Jellicoe incident, was laid up with a cold. I therefore visited him at Archway House, which adjoins the Admiralty buildings. We had a long and pleasant talk over our various problems. It was nearly noon when I regained my room in the Admiralty. I had hardly sat down when the door opened quickly and in marched Sir Arthur Wilson unannounced. He looked at me intently, and there was a glow in his eye. Behind him came Oliver with charts and compasses.

"First Lord, these fellows are coming out again."

"When?"

"To-night. We have just got time to get Beatty there."

We sent successively at brief intervals the following telegrams —

Admiralty to Commodore (T),¹ Harwich

Negative plan Z. All your destroyers and light cruisers will be wanted to-night. Negative sending destroyers to Sheerness for escort.

Admiralty to Vice-Admiral "Lion," Rosyth

Get ready to sail at once with all battle-cruisers and light cruisers and sea-going destroyers. Further orders follow.

Admiralty to Commander-in-Chief Grand Fleet

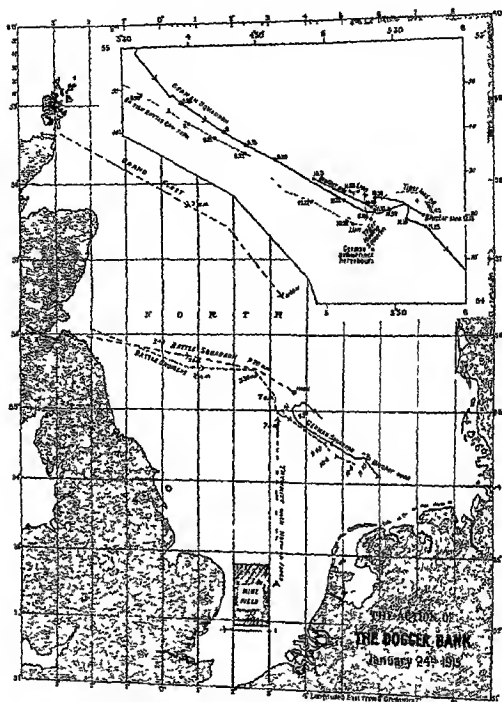
First, Second and Fourth Battle Squadrons, cruisers and light cruisers should be ready to sail after dark this evening.

Fixing the British Rendezvous

Thus done, Sir Arthur explained briefly the conclusions which he had formed from the intercepted German message which our cryptographers had translated, and from other intelligence of which he was a master. All the German fast vessels were putting to sea at dark, and a raid upon the British coast was clearly to be expected. My companions then addressed themselves to fixing the rendezvous for the various British forces. The chart and the compass circles showed in a moment that only Beatty from the Forth and Tyrwhitt from Harwich could intercept the Germans before they could strike and escape. The Grand Fleet could not reach the scene till the next afternoon, nor could any ships stationed at Cromarty. There was, however, just time for Beatty and Tyrwhitt to join forces at daylight near the Dogger Bank.

Wilson and Oliver had already drawn on the chart, with what afterwards proved to be almost exact accuracy, the probable line of the enemy's course.

¹ The officer commanding the Flotillas, Commodore Tyrwhitt, was styled in naval parlance Commodore of Torpedoes, or for short, "Commodore (T)." Similarly the Captain of Submarines was called "Captain (S)."



ACTION OF THE DOGGER BANK

Chart showing the progress hour by hour of the British and German ships during the naval action of January 24 1915

They stepped it out with the compasses hour by hour, at what they guessed would be the German speed, till it reached our coasts. They then drew from the Forth and Harwich the intercepting lines of Beatty and of Tyrwhitt. The intention was that the British forces should meet and be united at daybreak at some point about ten

miles, or half an hour behind the enemy after he had passed westward, and consequently he *between* him and *his* home. We discussed whether we could run the risk of a more adventurous scoop, i.e. a rendezvous for our ships still further to the eastward. This would give more certainty of being between the enemy and his home, but also more chance of

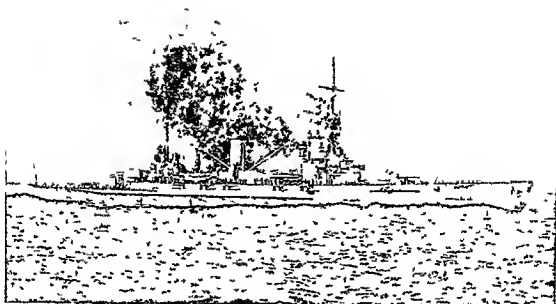


Photo Renard

THE GERMAN BATTLE-CRUISER *MOLTKE*

Launched at Hamburg in 1911 the *Moltke* had a speed of 27 knots and mounted ten 11-inch, twelve 5.9 inch and twelve smaller guns. She took part in the action of the Dogger Bank under Admiral von Hipper. She survived this action and was in commission throughout the war but being one of the German ships surrendered at Scapa Flow under the terms of the Peace Treaty, was sent to the bottom by her own crew.

missing him if the weather became thick, and remembering what had happened on December 16, this last possibility seemed a very serious one. Thus the rendezvous was fixed for 7 the next morning the 24th, in 55° 13' North, 3° 12' East, i.e. 180 miles from Heligoland and almost in a line drawn from Heligoland to the Firth of Forth.¹

The following telegram was sent to the Commander-in-Chief with the Grand Fleet at Scapa, to Admiral Bradford with the Third Battle Squadron, to Admiral Beatty with the battle-cruisers at Rosyth, and to Commodore Tyrwhitt with the light cruisers and destroyers at Harwich.²

"Four German battle-cruisers, six light cruisers and twenty-two destroyers will sail this evening to scout on Dogger Bank, probably returning to-morrow evening. All available battle-cruisers, light cruisers, and destroyers from Rosyth should proceed to a rendezvous in 55°

13' N, 3° 12' E, arriving at 7.0 a.m. to-morrow. Commodore (T) is to proceed with all available destroyers and light cruisers from Harwich to join Vice-Admiral Lion, at 7.0 a.m. at above rendezvous. If enemy is sighted by Commodore (T) while crossing their line of advance, they should be attacked. W[ireless] T[elegraphy] is not to be used unless absolutely necessary. Telegram has been sent to Commander-in-Chief Home Fleet, Vice-Admiral Lion, Vice-Admiral Third Battle Squadron, and Commodore (T)."

Lord Fisher Concurs—Suspense

Nearly an hour had passed in these calculations and discussions, and meanwhile the First Sea Lord was still unaware of what was taking place. I therefore asked Sir Arthur Wilson and the Chief of the Staff to take the charts and the draft telegram over to Archway House, and unless there was any difference of opinion, to despatch it forthwith. Lord Fisher was quite content with the decisions which were proposed, and action was taken accordingly.

The reader may imagine the tense

¹ The attention of the reader is directed to the Map and Plan facing p. 544.

² This telegram has already been published in Mr. Filson Young's account of this action, *With the Battle Cruisers*, p. 174.

feelings with which the long hours of the afternoon and evening were loaded. We shared our secret with none. That night I attended a dinner which the French Ambassador was giving to Monsieur Millerand, then Minister of War and in London on a mission of consequence. One felt separated from the distinguished company who gathered there, by a film of isolated knowledge and overwhelming inward preoccupation. In December we had hardly credited our sources of information. All was uncertain. It had even seemed probable that nothing would occur. Now with

that experience wrought into one's being only one thought could reign—battle at dawn! Battle for the first time in history between mighty super-Dreadnought ships! And there was added a thrilling sense of a Beast of Prey moving stealthily forward hour by hour towards the Trap.

* * * *

We were afoot the next morning while it was still dark, and Fisher, Wilson, Oliver and I were all in the War Room when daylight began to grow out of doors. The ordinary night staff of the various

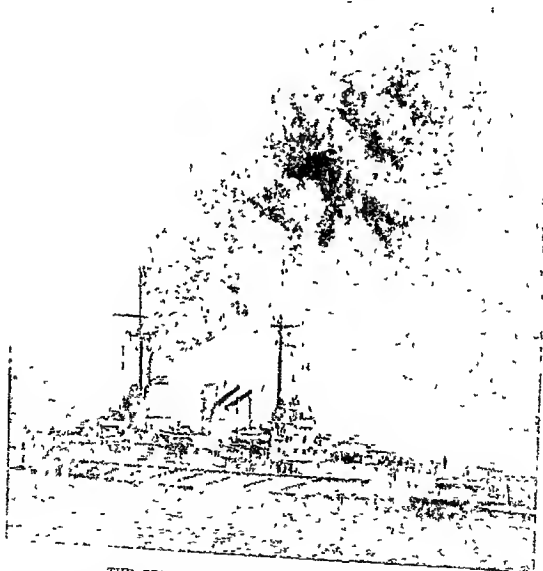


Photo Roland Gerbold

THE GERMAN ARMoured CRUISER *BLÜCHER*

Sunk in action at the sea battle in the North Sea on January 24, 1915. During the course of this action the *Blücher* was severely handled, many hits were registered upon her, including a salvo on the water line. Less than two hours after fire was opened the *Blücher* disabled was falling out of the line. She was burning furiously and was presently to heel over and go down with the majority of her officers and men.

departments were still at their posts Suddenly, with the sureness of destiny and the punctuality of a parade, a telegram intercepted from the Fleet was laid before us It was from the 1st Light Cruiser Squadron to the *Lion* (Beatty) and the *Iron Duke* (Jellicoe)

(Sent 7 30 a m Received 8 1 a m)

"Urgent Enemy in sight Lat 54° 54' N, Long 3° 30' E Steering East Consisting of battle-cruisers and cruisers, number unknown"

And two minutes later —

"Urgent Lat 55° 24' N, Long 4° 15' E Enemy in sight consisting of cruisers and destroyers, battle-cruisers, light cruisers, steering between South-east and South"

So once again it had all come true!

There can be few purely mental experiences more charged with cold excitement than to follow, almost from minute to minute, the phases of a great naval action from the silent rooms of the Admiralty Out on blue water in the fighting ships amid the stunning detonations of the cannonade, fractions of the event unfold themselves to the corporeal eye There is the sense of action at its highest, there is the wrath of battle, there is the intense, self-effacing, physical or mental toil But in Whitehall only the clock ticks, and quiet men enter with quick steps laying slips of pencilled paper before other men equally silent who draw lines and scribble calculations, and point with the finger or make brief subdued comments Telegram succeeds telegram at a few minutes' interval as they are picked up and decoded, often in the wrong sequence, frequently of dubious import, and out of these a picture always flickering and changing rises in the mind, and imagination strikes out around it at every stage flashes of hope or fear

Daybreak at the Admiralty—
Progress of the Action

1st Light Cruiser Squadron to Commander-in-Chief

(Sent 8 a m Received 8 20 a m)

Enemy's ships have altered course
to N E

"*Lion*" to Commander-in-Chief

(Sent 8 30 a m Received 8 37 a m)

Enemy sighted consisting four battle-cruisers, four light cruisers, destroyers number unknown, bearing S 61° E 11 miles My position Lat 54° 50' N, Long 3° 37' E Course S 40° E 26 knots

Commander-in-Chief to 3rd Battle Squadron

(Sent 9 a m Received 9 18 a m)

Steer towards Heligoland

Commodore Tyrwhitt to Commander-in-Chief

(Sent 9 5 a m Received 9 27 a m)

1st Flotilla and 3rd Flotilla are astern of battle-cruisers 2 miles

Commander-in-Chief to 3rd Battle Squadron

(Sent 9 20 a m Received 9 28 a m)

Act to support 1st Battle Cruiser Squadron

"*Lion*" to Commander-in-Chief

(Sent 9 30 a m Received 9 48 a m)

Am engaging enemy battle-cruisers Range 16,000 yards

1st Light Cruiser Squadron to "*Lion*"

(Sent 10 8 a m Received 10 18 a m)

Enemy detached one rearmost battle-cruiser Am driven off

1st Light Cruiser Squadron to "*Lion*"

(Sent 10 21 a m Received 10 27 a m)

Am keeping touch with enemy

1st Light Cruiser Squadron to Commander-in-Chief and "*Lion*"

(Sent 10 15 a m Received 10 59 a m)

Enemy's airships E S E

We had not heard the *Lion* speak for nearly an hour and a half, during the whole of which period presumably she and the First Battle Cruiser Squadron were in full battle Evidently Sir John Jellicoe also felt the weight of this oppressive silence

Commander-in-Chief to "*Lion*"

(Sent 11 1 a m Received by Admiralty 11 9 a m)

Are you in action?

Another twenty minutes' silence, seeming much longer, ensued. Then at last at 11.37 came in the following message not from the *Lion* or the First Battle Cruiser Squadron, but from the Senior Officer commanding the Second Battle Cruiser Squadron to the Commander-in-Chief —

"Heavy engagement with enemy battle-cruisers Lat 54° 19' N, Long 5° 05' E"

Some one said, "Moore is reporting, evidently the *Lion* is knocked out"

Across my mind there rose a purely irrelevant picture. I thought of the Memorial Services I had so often attended in Westminster Abbey the crowd and uniforms, the coffin with the Union Jack, the searching music, Beatty! That vision at least was not true, hut, alas, too true indeed, "The *Lion* knocked out"

* * *

Daybreak on the Dogger Bank—
Contact with the Enemy

It is time to escape from the tense atmosphere of the War Room and watch the squadrons on blue water

When the first light of the clear winter's morning shone on a calm sea, Admiral Beatty with his five battle-cruisers (*Lion*, *Tiger*, *Princess Royal*, *New Zealand* and *Indomitable*) and four light cruisers reached the rendezvous. Ten minutes later he sighted Commodore Tyrwhitt in the *Arcturion* with seven of his fastest "M" class destroyers, constituting the van of the Harwich force, and almost simultaneously there came the flash of the first gun. The *Aurora*, following the Commodore as fast as possible at a few miles' distance, with the *Undaunted* and twenty-eight more destroyers of the First and Third Flotillas, came into contact with Admiral von Hipper who, with the *Seydlitz*, *Moltke*, *Derfflinger* and *Blücher*, accompanied by four light cruisers and twenty-two German destroyers, was steaming along the very course and almost at the very moment which Wilson and Oliver had forecast. The *Aurora* opened fire upon a German light cruiser, and signalled immediately that she was engaged "with the High Seas fleet." Thus all three

lines of advance met almost at a single point

We have seen the causes that led to Admiral von Hipper's excursion. As day broke his ships were spread in line abreast on a considerable front, searching no doubt for British fishing vessels and light patrol forces. What followed is extremely simple. The moment the German Commander discovered himself in the presence of numerous British warships, including the battle-cruisers, his decision was taken. He collected his ships, turned completely round, and ran for home with the utmost possible despatch. Meanwhile Admiral Beatty, working up his speed with equal zeal, had already passed somewhat to the southward of the Germans, and by 8 o'clock was steaming on a parallel course about fourteen miles behind them. A tremendous race of all the fastest vessels in the two navies now began. Because of the danger of the retreating enemy dropping mines behind him, all the British vessels avoided his actual wake, Commodore Goodenough and his four light cruisers keeping slightly to the north, Tyrwhitt with his whole force of destroyers and cruisers keeping slightly to the south, and the British battle-cruisers further southward still.

In pursuit on land the battlefield is stationary and the troops move, in a stern chase at sea the ships alter their relative positions very gradually, while the battlefield rushes past as fast as a horse can gallop. In this posture, therefore, all parties to the event continued for a spell. Meanwhile the speed of the British battle-cruisers developed continually, and it soon became evident that they were gaining on the Germans. By 8.30 26 knots was realized, or one knot more than the designed speeds of the *Indomitable* and the *New Zealand*. Admiral Beatty signalled "Well done, *Indomitable*," and demanded 27, 28 and 29 knots in succession at brief intervals. These immense speeds could only be approached by his three leading ships the *Lion* in the van, the *Tiger* and the *Princess Royal*. It was his intention to overtake the enemy and bring him to battle in the first instance with his three ships against four.

The distance between the rearmost Germans and the leading British ships was now diminishing steadily. So great was the speed of the super-Dreadnoughts that the destroyers could barely hold their own with them. As the event had fallen, at the moment of contact Tyrwhitt and his forty vessels were pursuing a course which led between the hostile battle-cruiser squadrons. This was inconvenient, because by advancing and drawing abreast of the battle-cruisers—as did the fast "M" boats—they would obstruct their view with enormous clouds of smoke. On the other hand, at the pace at which all were going, it was not possible to shift them to the southern flank where they could have pressed ahead at a minimum of 27 knots. To fall back behind the British battle-cruisers and to turn off obliquely would have thrown them out of the hunt for good and all. They were therefore not able to overtake and head off the enemy, and remained somewhat shut in slightly astern of and inside the British battle-cruiser line.

The *Lion* Opens Fire

About 9 o'clock the *Lion* opened fire.¹ Up to 1914 the greatest range for battle practice had been 10,000 yards. In the spring of that year I had ordered an experimental firing at 14,000 yards, when to universal astonishment considerable accuracy was immediately attained. But this lesson had not been digested when the war broke out. Now in the first action between super-Dreadnought ships, the pursuers spontaneously opened fire at the hitherto unprecedented range of 20,000 yards. The second shot passed over the *Blucher*, and the *Lion* now began a deliberate fire upon this ship. As the range gradually shortened, the *Tiger* and the *Princess Royal* joined in, and hits upon the *Blucher* were almost immediately observed. At a quarter-past nine the Germans replied.

The *Lion* now reached out after the

Derfflinger, while the *Tiger* and the *Princess Royal* continued firing upon the *Blucher*. The fire became effective on both these two German ships. The third salvo hit the *Blucher* on the water-line, reducing her speed, the fourth wrought tremendous damage, disabling two after-turrets and between 200 and 300 men. At 9.35, the *New Zealand* having come into range of the *Blucher*, Admiral Beatty signalled his ships to engage their opposite numbers, ship for ship, he himself firing at the German flagship, *Seydlitz*, which was leading the retreat. The first shell of the *Lion* that hit the *Seydlitz* at over 17,000 yards range inflicted fearful damage, shattering her stern and wrecking both her rear turrets. "The entire gun crews of both turrets," wrote Admiral Scheer, "perished very quickly, the flames rose above the turrets as high as a house."

German Concentration against the *Lion*

Meanwhile, however, the enemy had also begun to hit. Owing to a misunderstanding of her orders, the *Tiger*, as well as the *Lion*, was firing upon the *Seydlitz* and missing her badly. The *Princess Royal* was rightly engaging the *Derfflinger*, the *New Zealand*, the *Blucher*, and the *Indomitable* was not within range. Thus the *Moltke* was free from all attack and able to fire undisturbed on the *Lion*.¹ All the three leading German ships concentrated their fire upon the *Lion*, and for the next hour and a half this noble vessel, hurled forward at her utmost speed, carried the dauntless flag of the Admiral into the teeth of the storm. The sea rose in mighty fountains all around her, which fell in hundreds of tons upon her deck. The splinters from shells bursting close alongside filled the air with fragments. From half-past nine onwards she was repeatedly struck. A little before ten her foremost turret was smashed in and one of its guns disabled. A few minutes later her armour was pierced by an 11-inch shell. At 10.18

¹ I have followed in the main the account given by the official historian, modified by the narrative of Commander Filson Young, an eye-witness in the foretop of the *Lion* and corrected and supplemented by other first-hand information.

¹ The Official Naval History has by mistake interchanged the *Moltke* and the *Derfflinger*. According to the German accounts it is clear that the *Moltke* was the ship running free and that she alone had no antagonist and no casualties.

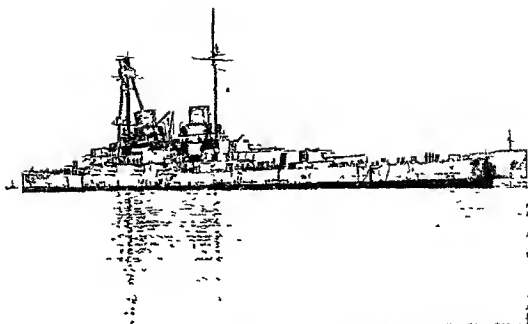


Photo Imperial War Museum

GERMAN BATTLE CRUISER DERFFLINGER

Another of the ships of Admiral von Hipper's squadron present at the action of the Dogger Bank. With the *Moltke* and the *Seydlitz* the *Derfflinger* was hotly engaged by Admiral Beatty's ship the *Leon* but when the British flagship, disabled, was forced to fall out of the line, the German ships, profiting by the temporary confusion which arose from the sudden cessation of direction, succeeded in making good their escape.

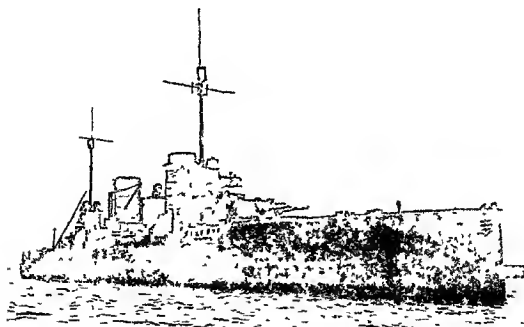


Photo Imperial War Museum

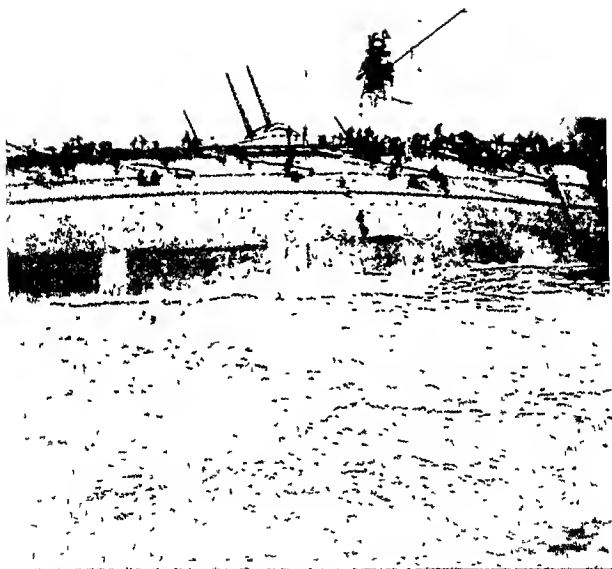
THE GERMAN BATTLE-CRUISER SEYDLITZ

The *Seydlitz* is a vessel of 25,000 tons and a speed of 26.5 knots, narrowly escaped, at the Dogger Bank action, sharing the fate of the *Blücher*. As it was she was severely damaged and reached port with difficulty in a sinking condition. Repaired and put once more into commission, she was ultimately, in 1918, surrendered to the British and on June 27, 1919, was sunk by her crew at Scapa Flow.



THE LAST

One of the most wonderful photographs taken in the course of the whole war this remarkable plunge. Hundreds of men can be seen swarming on the side of the doomed cruiser. Some discipline was maintained to the last. The bell used to call the ship's company to church pealed the *Blucher*, with three more for the Kaiser, and, after singing *Die Wacht am Rhein* the enemy as they could pick up, but of her crew of near



THE BLÜCHER

Photo Daily Mail

picture shows the last moments of the *Blücher* as heeling over she is about to take her final already in the icy water of the North Sea. From accounts subsequently given by survivors rang for the last time and the men assembled as best they could. Three cheers were given for were given permission to leave the ship. Boats from the British ships saved as many of the twelve hundred more than nine hundred perished.

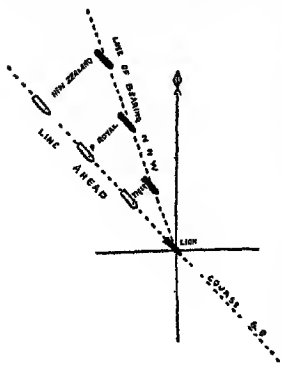
two 12-inch shells from the *Derfflinger* struck her—one piercing the armour, bursting behind it and flooding several compartments, the other driving in an armoured plate below the water-line.

The Admiral, disdaining the conning tower and standing with his staff upon the open bridge, continued to drive his flagship forward at her extreme speed, which was not yet impaired, zigzagging from time to time to spoil the accuracy of the enemy's fire. The situation was favourable. None of our battle-cruisers had been seriously damaged, and the *Indomitable* was available to deal with any wounded enemy ships. The critical period of the action was now approaching.

The *Lion* Crippled

At 10 22 Admiral Beatty finding his ships greatly hampered by smoke interference, ordered the battle-cruisers to "Form on a Line of Bearing N N W,"¹ and to proceed at their utmost speed. His intention was to avoid the smoke and splashes and bring the rear of his squadron into closer action with the enemy, who had formed on a Line of Bearing to Port of the *Seydlitz*. The German flotillas by altering their course to starboard threatened to draw him across their wake, i.e. into water where

¹ "Line of Bearing" is an échelon formation thus —



their mines and torpedoes might be encountered. This Parthian menace forced Admiral Beatty to desist from his closing movement, and to resume his parallel course under a tremendous fire.

The *Blucher* was now burning and falling out of the German line, and at 10 45 Admiral Beatty ordered his rearmost ship, the *Indomitable*, which was some distance astern but rapidly overhauling the *Blucher*, to "Attack the enemy breaking away to the Northward," meaning thereby the *Blucher*. He made further efforts to close, but at 10 52 while in the hottest action, with the *Seydlitz*, the *Moltke* and the *Derfflinger*, the *Lion*, which had already received fourteen hits, was suddenly struck in a spot vital to her speed and fatal, as it proved, to our complete victory. Her port engine failed, she listed 10 degrees and her speed sank in a few minutes to 15 knots.

At this moment (10 45) when the *Lion* was falling out of the line, and the *Tiger*, the *Princess Royal* and *New Zealand* were drawing swiftly past her, the wash of a periscope on the starboard bow was reported from the *Lion's* foretop to Admiral Beatty, and seen by both the Admiral and his staff. German submarines were, as we now know, actually in this area at the time. To avoid this new danger by a quick manoeuvre, he ordered the whole squadron to turn 8 points to port together, i.e. across the rear of the enemy and at right angles to his own previous course.

This movement was intended to be of the briefest duration, and four minutes later the Admiral modified it by the signal "Course North East." Matters now, however, passed completely beyond his control. The *Lion* was falling far astern of her consorts. Her wireless had been shot away, her searchlights were smashed, and only two signal balyards were left. Thus at this crisis when the great vessels, friend and foe, were shearing through the water at nearly 30 miles an hour and, once deflected, were altering their relationship in space every second, the *Lion*, carrying in Admiral Beatty the whole spirit and direction of the battle, was crippled and almost dumb. Her last two signals were "Attack the rear

of the enemy," and then as a parting injunction, "Keep closer to the enemy. Repeat the signal the Admiral is now making." But the signal flags blowing end on were difficult to read and none of the battle-cruisers took in the final order.

Rear-Admiral Moore in Command

It was at this juncture and in these circumstances that Rear-Admiral Moore, whose flag was flying in the *New Zealand*, now third in the line, succeeded to the command. He was an officer whose distinguished abilities had made him invaluable as Third Sea Lord during the greater part of my tenure at the Admiralty. He had earnestly desired a sea command adequate to his rank and services. His wish had been accorded, and now almost at once Fortune presented herself to him in mocking and dubious guise. He was not certain at first that he had succeeded to the command. It was never formally transferred. He did not know why Admiral Beatty had suddenly turned so sharply to the north. No hostile submarines had been reported to him.

The signal "Attack the rear of the enemy" was hoisted by the *Lion* before the compass signal "Course North East" had been hauled down. Both signals were therefore read by all the battle-cruisers as one, and this was interpreted by Rear-Admiral Moore as a direct order to attack the forlorn and isolated *Blucher*, which actually bore north-east from him at that moment. Neither Admiral Moore nor any of the battle-cruisers ever received the signal "Keep closer to the enemy." He therefore suffered the *Tiger*, his leading ship, to continue on her course under the same misconception of Admiral Beatty's orders which she had independently sustained. He gave no order of any kind until 11 52, nearly an hour after the *Lion* had fallen out of the line.

The Sinking of the *Blucher*

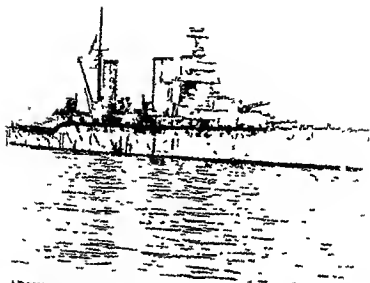
The whole operation therefore went to pieces. All four of the British battle-cruisers ceased firing on the retreating Germans, and began to circle round the wretched *Blucher* which, already a terrible

wreck, was being engaged by the light cruisers and the "M" destroyers. At ten minutes past twelve the *Blucher*, fighting with desperate courage to the last, rolled over and sank beneath the waves. Of her crew of nearly twelve hundred men, two hundred and fifty were picked up by the British destroyers and light cruisers, and more would have been saved, but for the intervention of a German seaplane which dropped its bombs indiscriminately on the drowning Germans and the British rescuers. Meanwhile Admiral von Hipper, delivered by a single fateful shot from almost certain destruction, continued to make off at his best speed towards Heligoland, then eighty miles away, two out of his three remaining ships burning fiercely, cumbered with wreckage and crowded with dead and wounded. Thus for the second time, when already in the jaws of destruction, the German Battle Cruiser Squadron escaped.

Severe Tests

In the opinion of his professional superiors at the Admiralty Rear-Admiral Moore had warrant for what he did or did not do. He had not departed from a strict interpretation of the actual orders taken in by his ships. These orders, uncorrected by the receipt of the final signal, "Keep closer to the enemy," seemed to suggest that some reason unknown to Rear-Admiral Moore had led the most daring of our naval leaders to break off the action. It is not easy to fix the precise moment, while the *Lion* was dropping astern, when the command actually passed to him. The greater his confidence in Admiral Beatty, the slower he would be to assume control and the more impressive the signal to change the course across the enemy's rear would appear.

A quarter of an hour might well have been accounted for in this way, and a quarter of an hour was a long time. Ships just holding their own in pursuit or in station on other ships, with only a small margin of speed to spare, lose distance very quickly once the parallel course is departed from. It was certainly open to him, once he was sure that he was in command and that Admiral Beatty was out of it, to



ADMIRAL BEATTY'S FLAGSHIP THE LION

Photo Gribb

This fine ship of 26 350 tons and a speed of 31 knots carried Admiral Beatty's flag during the battle of the Dogger Bank. Thanks to the damage caused by a shell from one of the enemy cruisers, the Lion was disabled, and her intrepid admiral, thrown out of touch with his squadron, was unable to complete the task so well begun.

resume the parallel course and reopen the action with von Hipper's disappearing vessels. But a long delay must have ensued before he could have come within range, and his squadron would all the time have been drawing nearer to Heligoland and the German High Seas Fleet.

* * *

Disappointment in Victory

The tests to which the Admirals in high command are subjected during a naval engagement are far more searching than those of Generals in a battle on land. The Admiral actually leads the Fleet in person and is probably under as severe fire and in as great danger as any man in it, a General, whatever his wishes, has no choice but to remain in his headquarters in complete tranquillity, ten, fifteen or even twenty miles away. The General is forced to rely on the reports of others which flow upwards to him from

Brigades, Divisions and Corps, and transmits his orders through the same channel after consultation with his staff, the Admiral sees with his own eyes, and with his own lips pronounces the orders which move the whole mighty event. The phases of a naval action succeed one another at intervals of two or three minutes, whereas in modern battles two or three hours, and sometimes even days, elapse before fresh decisions are required from an Army Commander. Once the sea battle is joined the whole event is in the hand of the Admiral or his successor as long as he can signal, whereas on land, after zero hour has struck, it escapes for the time being almost entirely from the control of the General.

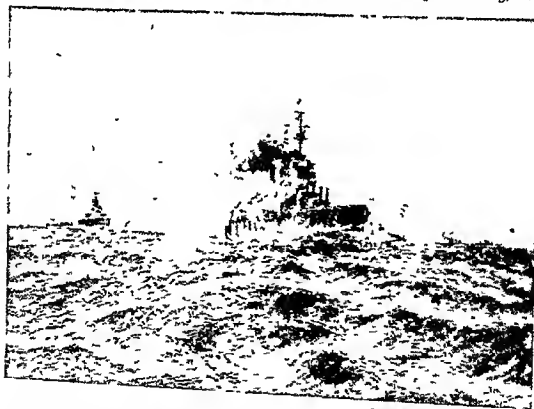
There are a hundred ways of explaining a defeat on land and of obscuring the consequences of any mistake. Of these the simplest is to continue the attack next day in a different direction or under

different conditions. But on the sea no chance returns. The enemy disappears for months and the battle is over. The Admiral's orders uttered from minute to minute are recorded for ever in the log-book of every vessel engaged. The great ships, unless their mechanism ceases to function, obey punctually and memorably the directions they receive from the human will. The course and speed of every vessel at every moment are recorded. The value of every vessel sunk is known. Their names are published. The charts and compasses are produced, and with almost exact accuracy the position and movement of every ship can be fixed in relation to every other. The battlefield is flat and almost unvarying. Exact explanations can be required at every point, and the whole intense scene can be reconstructed and analysed in the glare of history. This should always be borne in mind in forming judgments.

* * * * *
While these grave matters had so

decided themselves, Admiral Beatty, far astern and believing the chase was being continued, had resolved to quit the wounded *Lion* and, hoisting his flag upon the destroyer *Attack*, hastened forward to overtake the battle. Instead, somewhat after noon he met his ships coming back towards him. In the first bitterness at learning that the rest of the enemy had escaped he ordered the chase to be resumed, although there was now no chance of its succeeding. Twenty or thirty precious minutes had been lost, and with them twenty or thirty thousand yards. This was irretrievable. And realising that further pursuit was useless, he turned back and steered towards the *Lion* to make provision for her safety and return to the Firth.

The condition of the *Lion* seemed for some time critical. Her speed fell to 8 knots, her list increased, and serious anxiety arose. Her engines finally became incapable of steaming at all. She was taken in tow by the *Indomitable*, and in this fashion began her long, slow



THE LION IN ACTION

Painting Arthur J. W. Burgess

This illustration of the British ships led by the *Lion*, in action with the German squadron at the battle of the Dogger Bank is reproduced from a picture painted by Arthur J. W. Burgess and exhibited in the Royal Academy of 1915. The *Lion* is seen to be driving through the angry waters of the North Sea at her maximum speed, with the *Tiger* close astern. Cascades of water are rising on all sides as heavy shells from the enemy ships plunge into the sea.

and dangerous return to the Forth Sixty destroyers under Commodore Tyrwhitt surrounded her in ceaseless evolutions, protecting her from torpedo or submarine attack all through the night of the 24th and through the 25th "If submarines are seen," ordered the Commodore, "shoot and ram them without regard to your neighbours" At daylight on the 26th the *Lion*, amid cheering crowds, was brought safely to anchor at Rosyth

* * * *

My Letter to the Prime Minister of January 24

After the action had been finally broken off I sent a messenger by motor-car with the following letter to the Prime Minister who was at Walmer —

Mr Churchill to Mr Asquith

January 24, 1915, 3.45 p.m.

This morning Beatty, with 5 battle-cruisers and a superior force of light

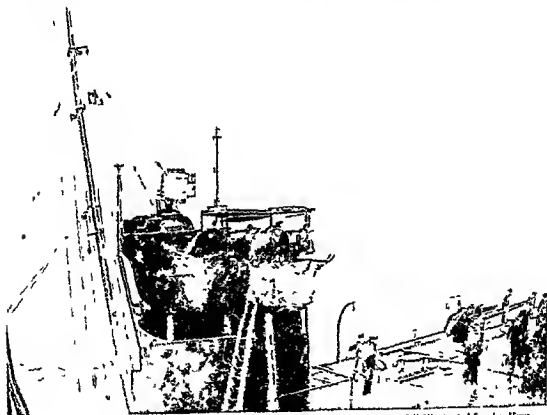
cruisers and destroyers, met *Derfflinger*, *Seydlitz*, *Moltke*, and *Blucher* with light cruisers and destroyers in the middle of the North Sea. The Germans ran for home immediately, and a fierce pursuit ensued, producing a severe action between the battle-cruisers on both sides.

The *Lion* is damaged, but is returning home at 12 knots. Beatty has shifted his flag to the *Princess Royal*.

The *Blucher* (15,500 tons, 25½ knots), practically a battle-cruiser, though with 12 8.2-inch guns and 880 men,¹ [is] sunk. Two other German battle-cruisers reported seriously injured. Deserting the *Blucher*, the Germans managed to make good their escape into their own torpedo area where we thought better not to follow.

I have no details so far of the destroyer and light-cruiser fighting, but *Melcor*, one of our destroyers, is reported

¹ She actually had nearly 1,200 men on board.



By permission of "Illustrated London News"

ADMIRAL BEATTY ON THE DESTROYER ATTACK

When Admiral Beatty learned that the damage to his flagship was serious and incapable of even temporary repair, he summoned the destroyer *Attack* and having transferred his flag to her set out in pursuit of his disappearing squadron. He is seen here on the bridge of *Attack* immediately after the transfer has been accomplished. This photograph was taken from the deck of the crippled *Lion*.

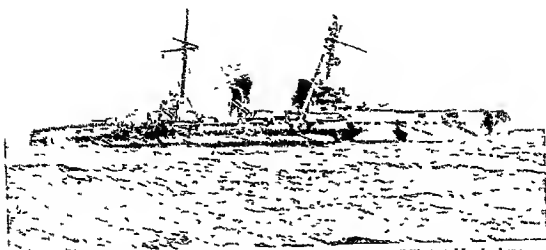


Photo "Illustrated London News"

THE BLUCHER ON FIRE

This photograph taken a short time before that given on pp 552 and 553, shows the ill-fated cruiser ablaze and crippled shortly before she began to turn over

damaged, and I am hopeful that some business has been done. Our ships are now returning.

This action gives us a good line for judging the results of a general battle. It may be roughly said that we should probably fight 6 to 4 at the worst, whereas to-day was 5 to 4. *Blücher* is a heavy loss to the German cruiser fleet—she was only five years old.

I am very grateful to you for not pressing me about Jellicoe.

Late that night came his answer back —

Mr Asquith to Mr Churchill

Sunday

I think this news very good and congratulate you heartily

* * * *

Proposal to Base the Grand Fleet on the Forth

The result of the engagement confirmed and fortified my own convictions of the great strength of the British line of battle, and in particular of the ships armed with the 13.5-inch guns. But while the strength of the Fleet was proved to be satisfactory, its strategic station was also proved to be too remote. But for the fact that the battle-cruisers had been held at the Forth against the

wishes of the Commander-in-Chief, the Germans would have raided the British coasts with impunity. Nothing but Tyrwhitt and his light cruisers and flotillas could have caught them, and these would have been easily repulsed and seriously handled in a daylight action by the forces which the Germans sent to sea.

At the moment of contact with the enemy the Grand Fleet was nearly 150 miles to the northward. It was completely out of relation and could not, unless the fight moved towards it, have come into action that day. The only support which was available for Admiral Beatty was the Third Battle Squadron. Had the German High Sea Fleet been at sea to sustain its fast forces, we should have been powerless to strike, if not indeed in serious danger of being struck. I therefore, as soon as we could appreciate the results of the battle, addressed the following letter to the Commander-in-Chief —

My Letter to Sir John Jellicoe of January 26

Mr Churchill to Sir John Jellicoe

January 26, 1915

I wish you to consider moving your base from Scapa Flow to the Firth of Forth. The Firth of Forth is specified

in your War Orders as your principal fuelling base. It is a strongly defended port. It has many facilities which are lacking at Scapa. The inner line of anti-submarine defences has been completed and is thoroughly satisfactory, the outer line is almost completed, and the Oscars, Inch Mickery, and Inch Colm islets are defended with guns and lights. There is therefore ample room for your whole fleet. In order to get full security, we require a greater concentration of our resources. If you came South and joined all your trawlers and defensive flotillas to those already at the Forth it would be possible to keep an area at least 40 miles from May Island absolutely swept and secured.

Admiral Lowry has shown himself to be a thoroughly competent officer, and with the large numbers of protective and scouting vessels which would then be available, as well as a large supply of seaplanes, your exits and entrances could be made safer than at Scapa. Scapa should, of course, be kept up on a reduced scale, occupied by the 10th Battle Squadron,¹ and watched by a few destroyers and trawlers from Cromarty. Cromarty would remain as at present. We would endeavour to bring the Medway floating dock to Rosyth, and gather a regular repairing staff there. This would help you in refits.

You would then have under your band three flotillas of the First Fleet, comprising 63 seagoing destroyers, your present 29 and "Oak," less 8, Admiral Lowry's 7 destroyers and 12 ex-coastals—a total of 103 destroyers. You would have your own 84 trawlers and mine-sweepers, 8 yachts, and 8 motor boats added to Admiral Lowry's 61 trawlers and minesweepers, 7 yachts, and 13 motor boats, and we could concentrate at least 30 mine-sweeping trawlers from Charlton's general force, to make a total, if necessary, of over 200 organized small craft to watch, picket, and sweep the approaches. Besides this, there are Lowry's 8 submarines. I could put 20 seaplanes at your disposal. In fact, it seems to me certain that you could be made as safe and comfortable at the Forth as the Germans are in the Elbe,

¹ The dummy battleships

while the sweeping outwards for mines and picketing against submarines and minelayers would be far more thoroughly carried out in this limited area than at present. It would also be easy to devise a system of defensive minefields which would keep the enemy at a distance, but through which we could easily pass.

The strategic advantages are too obvious to require enlarging upon. You would have your four battle squadrons united. It has now been decided to strengthen greatly the minefield north of the Straits of Dover so as to close that channel effectively to heavy ships. When this is done, the 5th Battle Squadron (two "Lord Nelsons" and six "Formidables") will be moved to the Humber, and join the 1st Cruiser Squadron and patrol flotillas there. The Harwich Striking Force, although seriously weakened by the withdrawal of the First Flotilla, will comprise five "Arethusas," and all the "L" and the "M" class destroyers, together with the overseas submarines.

With both these forces, you would be in close relation and would be able to give a greater personal direction to the operations than is possible while you remain at such a distance from the scene of action.

All this is of course in the future, but if the change could be made in the next month or six weeks, it seems to me that on every ground great advantages would be secured. Your fleet would be not less safe and more efficient, and the strategic situation, whether for the attack of the enemy or for the defence of this country, would be vastly improved.

I send you a copy of a project¹ which we are considering here for the reorganization of the battle and light cruisers which will greatly strengthen the force at your disposal. It embodies the principle of scouting groups, any two of which are capable of meeting the whole fast forces of the enemy.

I have never said or thought that you are too lavish with your refits, though I think that sometimes during critical periods it is well to suspend them. Also I hope that for the present the ships will stay as much as possible in harbour so as to reduce wear and tear to a minimum.

¹ The Battle Cruiser Fleet

The action on Sunday bears out all I have thought of the relative British and German strength. It is clear that at five to four they have no thought but flight, and that a battle fought out on this margin could have only one ending. The immense power of the 13.5-inch gun is clearly decisive on the minds of the enemy as well as on the progress of the action. I should not feel the slightest anxiety at the idea of your engaging with equality. Still I think it would be bad management on our part if your superiority was not much nearer six to four than five to four, even under the worst conditions.

Effects of the Victory at Home and Abroad

One cannot now dispute the advantages of moving the Grand Fleet to the Forth. It would have taken four or five months to prepare the new base and its defences in a satisfactory way. My representations were, however, unsuccessful, and after correspondence which extended over six weeks I found myself compelled to minute on March 3 —

The Commander-in-Chief's view must prevail, and in consequence I consider that the land defences of Scapa should immediately be begun on an emergency but semi-permanent, scale.¹ A regular system of guns and lights on shore should be devised. Store houses, jetties and other conveniences should be taken in hand, and provision made for the comfort and recreation of the Fleet. I should be glad if the Third Sea Lord

¹ Up to this date all the defences were floating.

would call a small Committee to report on the subject and propose all the necessary measures. Buildings should be rented and converted as far as possible, and any new structures erected should be of the kind that can be put up most quickly. But it is clear the Fleet will have to stay there for a long time to come and should make themselves comfortable and safe.

W S C

It was not until 1917, after Admiral Beatty had become Commander-in-Chief, that the Grand Fleet was based on the Forth of Forth.

* * * *

The victory of the Dogger Bank brought for the time being abruptly to an end the adverse movement against my administration of the Admiralty, which had begun to gather. Congratulations flowed in from every side, and we enjoyed once again an adequate measure of prestige. The sinking of the *Blücher* and the fight, after heavy injuries, of the other German ships was accepted as a solid and indisputable result. The German Emperor was confirmed in the gloomy impressions he had sustained after the action of August 28, 1914. All enterprise in the German Admiralty was again effectually quelled, and apart from submarine warfare a period of nearly fifteen months halcyon calm reigned over the North Sea and throughout Home Waters. The neutral world accepted the event as a decisive proof of British supremacy at sea, and even at home the Admiralty felt the benefit in a sensible increase of confidence and goodwill.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

SECOND THOUGHTS AND FINAL DECISION

Progress of the Dardanelles Plan—Change in Lord Fisher's View—Minute from First Lord to Lord Fisher—Lord Fisher's Memorandum of January 25, 1915—The Russian Reply about the Dardanelles—My Memorandum of January 27—Increasing Strength of the Grand Fleet—Functions of the Navy—Interview with the Prime Minister—The War Council of January 28—Lord Fisher's Behaviour—His Final Consent—The Passive Hypothesis

UP to about January 20 there seemed to be unanimous agreement in favour of the naval enterprise against the Dardanelles. War Office, Foreign Office, Admiralty seemed by their representatives to be equally in earnest.

Progress of the Dardanelles Plan

The War Council had taken its decision. It is true it was not a final or irrevocable decision. It authorized and encouraged the Admiralty to survey their resources and develop their plans. If these plans broke down in preparation it would be quite easy for us to report the fact to the War Council and go no farther. But the staff work continued to progress smoothly, and all the Admirals concerned appeared in complete accord. It was not until the end of January, when negotiations with the French and Russian Governments were far advanced, when many preparations had been made, when many orders had been given and when many ships were moving with his full authority, that Lord Fisher began to manifest an increasing dislike and opposition to the scheme.

Meanwhile the possibilities of a British naval offensive or of amphibious action in northern waters were becoming continually more remote. Correspondence with Sir John Jellicoe showed the Commander-in-Chief averse from anything in the nature of an attack upon Borkum or an attempt to enter the Baltic. To strengthen our naval forces by every conceivable means, to add every new vessel to the Grand Fleet and to remain in an attitude of inactive expectancy was the sum and substance of the naval policy advocated from this

quarter. At the same time the opposition of General Joffre to Sir John French's plans for an advance in force along the Belgian coast brought that project also to an end. It was clear that no serious naval offensive would take place in the northern theatre for an indefinite period, and that any plans which might gradually be perfected for such an offensive would derive no encouragement from the Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet.

All this made me only the more anxious to act in the Mediterranean. That seemed to be the direction reserved for our surplus ships and ammunition, by the failure or postponement of other alternatives. It was the only direction in which we had a practical plan, properly worked out by the staff, and supported by a powerful consensus of naval and political opinion.

Change in Lord Fisher's View

As soon, however, as the Commander-in-Chief realized that the *Queen Elizabeth*, a battle-cruiser, and other powerful ships were to be assigned to the Mediterranean theatre, he began to dwell again upon the weakness of his fleet and the insufficiency of his margins. And now for the first time he found a ready listener in the First Sea Lord.

Lord Fisher's sudden dislike of the Dardanelles project seemed to arise at this time largely and even primarily from his reluctance to undertake the bombardment and blocking in of Zeebrugge. This operation appeared all the more necessary now that the Army had abandoned their intention of an advance along the Belgian coast. It was strongly urged by the War Council,



THE TOWN OF CHANAK

Photo Imperial War Museum

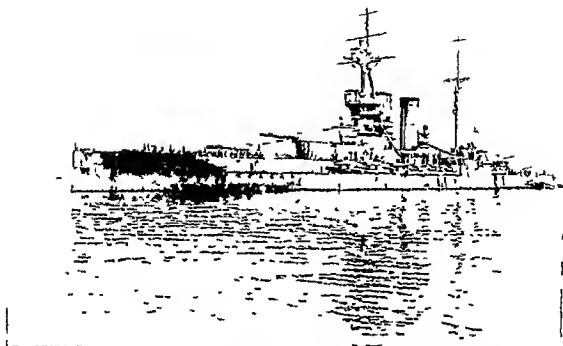
Chanak is the principal town on the Asiatic shore of the Dardanelles. It stands at the narrowest point of the Straits and was unsuccessfully attacked by the ships of the Allied Fleets in March, 1915. Chanak has a population of some thirteen thousand.

by the Admiralty Staff and especially by Sir Arthur Wilson. "If we do not block the Zeebrugge canal," Sir Arthur had written on January 4, "I think we shall inevitably lose more ships and also many transports. If we had done it last time we bombarded, we should not have lost *Formidable*. We cannot keep ships entirely locked up in harbour without deterioration. So far very few of our losses have been incurred while the ships have been employed in any active operations."

I was in cordial agreement with this doctrine. Ultimately, as everyone knows, the blocking of Zeebrugge had to be carried out under circumstances of infinitely greater difficulty and after we had suffered grievous injury. The First Sea Lord, finding himself entirely alone

on the question, became very much disturbed. His dislike of the Zeebrugge operation was extended not only to the Dardanelles plan, but to all plans of naval attack on hostile coasts which were not combined with large land forces, and ultimately he expressed opinions which seemed opposed to any form of naval intervention in any quarter. This was a great change, at variance both with his earlier and later attitudes, and I was concerned to observe it.

Lord Fisher's arguments did not take the form of criticizing the details of either operations in question. He did not, for instance, deal with the gunnery aspects of the Dardanelles, or with any purely technical aspect, in regard to which any valid argument would have had to be met, or the plan abandoned. It was



A FAMOUS BATTLESHIP

Photo Imperial War Museum

The *Queen Elizabeth* one of the most celebrated of British fighting ships, was built at Portsmouth and joined the active list on December 22, 1914. She was the first warship to carry 15 inch guns of which she has eight. In addition to these great pieces of ordnance the *Queen Elizabeth* mounts twelve 6 inch and four 3-inch guns and has five submerged torpedo tubes. She was the flagship of Vice-Admirals Carden and de Robeck at the Dardanelles and later was fleet flagship of the Grand Fleet. It was in the after cabin of the *Queen Elizabeth* that Rear-Admiral von Reuter made the final act of submission of the German Fleet.

about the safety of the Grand Fleet and its margin of superiority that he now professed to be seriously perturbed. This was a subject with which I was extremely familiar. Had we not been two months before over the whole ground together in the discussions of November with the Commander-in-Chief? There was no real substance in the apprehensions with which I was now confronted. An important fact however lay behind them. Lord Fisher had on reflection, on second thoughts, on some prompting or other, turned against the operation which he had hitherto willingly supported. Nevertheless matters had moved forward to a point where mere vague misgivings could not be allowed to paralyse action. Good reasoning or new facts were required.

Minute from First Lord to Lord Fisher

On January 20 in response to the First Sea Lord's real or affected misgivings I sent him a minute, observing —

You seem to have altered your views, since taking office, about the relative strengths of the British and German Grand and High Sea Fleets. In November you advised the removal of *Princess Royal*, *Inflexible*, and *Invincible*, together with 8 "King Edwards" and 5 "Duncans," a total of 16 capital ships, from the Grand Fleet, some for temporary duties of importance, but the battleships for permanent service in the south. The dispositions were carried out. Since then the Commander-in-Chief has received back the 8 "King Edwards" and the *Princess Royal*, he — — — — — the *Indomitable*, he has

received the *Warrior*, *Duke of Edinburgh*, *Black Prince*, *Gloucester*, *Yarmouth*, *Caroline*, *Galatea*, *Donegal*, and *Leviathan*, together with 16 destroyers additional, and, I think, about 50 extra trawlers and yachts. These are immense additions to his strength, and I know of no new circumstances which have arisen or of reinforcements which have reached the enemy which ought to make us anxious now if we were not anxious before these great additions reached Sir John Jellicoe.

Lord Fisher did not dispute this general argument, but he returned to the charge on the question of destroyers, admittedly our weakest point, and demanded the return of a whole flotilla from the Dardanelles. I could not agree

to this, as of course it would have paralysed the Dardanelles Fleet and destroyed the plans which the staff were maturing. At the same time Sir Arthur Wilson continued to press for action against Zeebrugge.

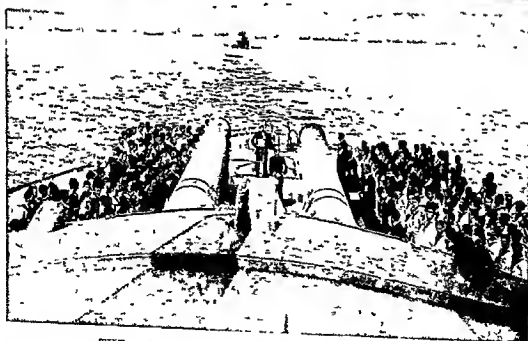
Lord Fisher's Memorandum of January 25, 1915

This double pressure brought matters to a head.

January 25, 1915

First Lord

I have no desire to continue a useless resistance in the War Council to plans I cannot concur in, but I would ask that the enclosed may be printed and circulated to its members before the next meeting.



THE 15-INCH GUNS OF THE QUEEN ELIZABETH

Photo E.N.A.

This photograph showing a church parade being conducted under the shadow of the *Queen Elizabeth's* great guns conveys some idea of their size. The 15 inch guns mounted on the ship could hurl a shell weighing nearly a ton to a distance of over fifteen miles. They were employed with devastating effect against Turkish fortifications and trench lines at Gallipoli.

The Memorandum has an argument for adherence to the Fleet's "policy of steady pressure" and for remaining passive except for efforts to force a general action. The following paragraphs may be quoted —

Of all strategical attitudes that of a naval defensive as adopted by Germany is the most difficult to meet and the most deeply fraught with danger for the opposing belligerent, if he is weak ashore as we are, and his enemy strong ashore as Germany is. Nevertheless, all through our history we have had to encounter similar situations. The policy of the French in nearly all our naval wars was the policy which Germany has now adopted. Our reply to-day must be the same as our reply was then, namely, to be content to remain in possession of our command of the sea, husbanding our strength until the gradual pressure of sea power compels the enemy's fleet to make an effort to attack us at a disadvantage.

In the Seven Years' War the French preserved their fleet from a decision for five years. Nelson was off Toulon for two years. By comparison, the six months during which Sir John Jellicoe has had to wait are short, and they have been relieved by incidents which have considerably diminished the enemy's forces.

The pressure of sea power to-day is probably not less but greater and more rapid in action than in the past, but it is still a slow process and requires great patience. In time it will almost certainly compel the enemy to seek a decision at sea, particularly when he begins to realize that his offensive on land is broken. This is one reason for husbanding our resources. Another reason is that the prolongation of war at sea tends to raise up fresh enemies for the dominant naval power in a much higher degree than it does on land owing to the exasperation of neutrals. This tendency will only be checked by the conviction of an overwhelming naval supremacy behind the nation exercising sea power.

We play into Germany's hands if we risk fighting ships in any subsidiary operations such as coastal bombardments

or the attack of fortified places without military co-operation, for we thereby increase the possibility that the Germans may be able to engage our fleet with some approach to equality of strength. The sole justification of coastal bombardments and attacks by the fleet on fortified places, such as the contemplated prolonged bombardment of the Dardanelles Ports by our fleet, is to force a decision at sea, and so far and no farther can they be justified.

So long as the German High Sea Fleet preserves its present great strength and splendid gunnery efficiency, so long is it imperative and indeed vital that no operation whatever should be undertaken by the British Fleet, calculated to impair its present superiority. Even the older ships should not be risked, for they cannot be lost without losing men, and they form our only reserve behind the Grand Fleet.

Ours is the supreme necessity, and difficulty of remaining passive except in so far as we can force the enemy to abandon his defensive and to expose his fleet to a general action.

It has been said that the first function of the British Army is to assist the fleet in obtaining command of the sea. This might be accomplished by military co-operation with the Navy in such operations as the attack of Zeebrugge or the forcing of the Dardanelles, which might bring out the German and Turkish fleets respectively. Apparently, however, this is not to be. The English Army is apparently to continue to provide a small sector of the allied front in France, where it no more helps the Navy than if it were at Timbuctoo.

Being already in possession of all that a powerful fleet can give a country we should continue quietly to enjoy the advantage without dissipating our strength in operations that cannot improve the position.

FISHER

This paper was not, I think, except for the last few characteristic sentences, Lord Fisher's own composition. It had been prepared in accordance with his directions. It was, of course, absolutely counter to all my convictions. No one, certainly, wished to "dissipate our

strength in operations that cannot improve the position." To write thus was to beg the question. But the naval policy emerging from its last sentence would have condemned us to complete inactivity. It was no doubt the policy pursued by the Commander-in-Chief and the Admiralty after I quitted office. It was the policy which led directly to the supreme submarine peril in 1917.

* * *

The Russian Reply about the Dardanelles

Meanwhile on the 26th arrived the Russian reply to my telegram informing the Grand Duke of the Dardanelles plans. It was of course favourable but not helpful. Sir Edward Grey forwarded it to me, with the following remarks —

"This is the Russian reply about Dardanelles. It shows that, though Russia cannot help, the operation has her entire goodwill, and the Grand Duke attaches the greatest importance to its success.

"This fact may be used with Augagneur¹ to show that we must go ahead with it and that failure to do so will disappoint Russia and react most unfavourably upon the military situation, about which France and we are specially concerned just now."

My Memorandum of January 27

I now addressed myself to the First Sea Lord's paper which I forwarded to the Prime Minister with the following reply, of which I sent Lord Fisher a copy:

MEMORANDUM BY THE FIRST LORD

January 27, 1915

The main principle of the First Sea Lord's paper is indisputable. The foundation of our naval policy is the maintenance in a secure position of a Battle Fleet with all ancillary vessels capable at any time of defeating the German High Sea Fleet in battle, and reserved for that purpose above and before all other duties. This principle has been and will be fully and strictly observed.

The ships engaged in Sunday's action [the Dogger Bank] on both sides represented very fairly, so far as individual

¹ The French Minister of Marine

quality is concerned, the classes of vessels which would be opposed in a general fleet action. The event proved that a superiority of 5 to 4 in our favour is decisive. On these terms the German ships thought of nothing but retreat, and the British of attack. Very heavy loss was inflicted upon the Germans: one ship was sunk out of four, and 2 other ships most severely damaged. Had the action been fought out, the destruction of the others was certain.

We are now no longer in the region of mere speculation. The relative qualities of seamanship and gunnery of the two sides have been put to the test and reveal no inferiority on our part, while the superiority of the 13.5-inch gun and the effect of heavier metal generally has now been shown. There is therefore every reason to believe that the best 21 British battleships and battle-cruisers could defeat decisively at even numbers the 21 German Dreadnoughts. Any British ships additional to this number must be regarded as an insurance against unexpected losses by mine and torpedo.

On the declaration of war the maximum numbers available in Home Waters on both sides were: Great Britain, 24+2 "Lord Nelsons", Germany, 21. Since then the following capital units have joined the Fleet: *Queen Elizabeth*, *Eryn*, *Agincourt*, *Benbow*, *Emperor of India*, *Tiger*, *Indomitable*, and the following will join during the next month: *Inflexible*, *Invincible*, and perhaps *Australis*, against which we have lost *Audacious*. In addition to these the Grand Fleet and Harwich Striking Force have been strengthened by eighteen cruisers and thirty-six destroyers.¹

Meanwhile the German Fleet in Home Waters has received no new accession of strength and has suffered the following losses in modern ships: *Blucher*, *Magdeburg*, *Köln*, *Mainz*, and 10 or 12 Destroyers.

Increasing Strength of the Grand Fleet

It should be recognized that the progressive improvement in types has been so marked that ships over 12 years old can only play a secondary part in the war. Their speed would probably

¹ Names omitted



THE

An important point in the Narrows on the peninsula above
Barr. During the Great War the place was

prevent them from participating in the main action, except against each other, and would expose them to almost certain destruction if overtaken by the latest types. However in this pre-Dreadnought class we have also an immense superiority. The 8 "King Edwards" are already a part of the Grand Fleet, and it can be strengthened at any time by the addition of the 2 "Lord Nelsons" and the 6 remaining "Formidables." This fleet would easily and certainly destroy the whole of the German pre-Dreadnought battle fleet.

During the course of the present year 8 battleships 5 of over 26-knots speed and the whole armed with 15-inch guns, constituting a squadron probably capable of fighting by itself the two best squadrons of the German Navy will be available for reinforcement or replacement of casualties. Since the war commenced 8 light cruisers have already been commissioned for service in Home Waters, 8 more will be delivered in the

next three months, and 1 more in the three months after that. All these cruisers are superior in speed and gun power to any of the German light cruisers afloat. There will also be available during the year 56 destroyers, between 50 and 75 submarines, 21 small gunboats for subsidiary duties, together with other miscellaneous auxiliary vessels. It is therefore certain that the strength of the Grand Fleet which was originally sufficient, has now been greatly augmented and will continually increase. The first principle laid down by the First Sea Lord is thus most fully met.

Functions of the Navy

The second vital function of the Navy is the protection of trade and the control of sea communications. All German cruisers and gunboats abroad have been sunk, blocked in or interned with the exception of the *Kaiser* and *Derfflinger*, which are hiding. There are great doubts as to the efficiency of the *Kaiser*, of whom nothing has been heard for nearly three months. There are believed to be 2 German armed merchantmen at large

The two Lord Nelsons are Lord Nelson and Lord Nelson, and have not yet been added to Lord Fisher to the Formidables Fleet.



F MAIDOS

Photo Imperial War Museum

Jardanelles Maidos is situated about three miles north of Kihd
he Turks as a link in their line of communications

(the *Kronprinz Wilhelm* and *Prinz Esfel Friedrich*) All the rest of the 42 prepared for arming and which it has been intended to let loose on the trade routes have been blockaded, interned, sunk, or captured

Meanwhile the other functions of the Navy, viz the control of the English Channel and its approaches, the patrol of the Straits of Dover, the patrol flotillas of the East Coast, and the special Harwich Striking Force, are all provided for

Over and above all the foregoing, and after meeting all purely naval claims, we have available the following battleships completely manned and supplied with their own ammunition and its reserve

5 "Duncans"

6 "Canopus"

9 "Majestics"

1 "Royal Sovereign"

Between the beginning of April and the end of July we shall also receive 14 heavily armoured, shallow-draft Monitors, 2 armed with two 15-inch guns, 4 armed with two 14-inch guns, and 8 armed with two 12-inch guns. These

last 8 will be armed by taking the turrets out of 4 of the "Majestics" It is this force which it is proposed to use for special services and for bombarding as may be necessary from time to time in furtherance of objects of great strategic and political importance, among which the following may be specifically mentioned —

1 The operations at the Dardanelles,

2 The support of the left flank of the

Army

3 The bombardment of Zeebrugge, and later on

4 The seizure of Borkum

It is believed that with care and skill losses may be reduced to a minimum and certainly kept within limits fully justified by the importance and necessity of the operations. It cannot be said that this employment of ships which are (except the "Duncans") not needed and not suited to fight in the line of battle, conflicts with any of the sound principles of naval policy set forth by the First Sea Lord. Not to use them where necessary because of some fear that there will be an outcry if a ship is

lost would be wrong, and, if certain proportion of loss of life among officers and men of the Royal Navy serving on these ships can achieve important objects of the war and save a very much greater loss of life among our comrades and allies on shore, we ought certainly not to shrink from it

W S C

Interview with the Prime Minister

The First Sea Lord could not in his heart feel at all anxious about the Grand Fleet margin. He knew that I knew his real convictions about it. He did not attempt to continue the discussion on a false basis, but he expressed an intention of not attending the War Council which was fixed for the next day—the 28th. This was, of course, impossible. I insisted that he should be present, and arranged for a private meeting for both of us with the Prime Minister before the Council. To this Lord Fisher consented.

We repaired accordingly to Mr Asquith's room twenty minutes before the War Council was to meet. No written record of this discussion has

been preserved, but there is no dispute about it. "Save in respect of some points of slight importance as regards the precise language used," say the Dardanelles Commissioners, "the accounts given us by Mr Asquith and Lord Fisher, as regards what occurred at this private meeting, tally." Lord Fisher indicated very briefly his objections to both the Zeebrugge and Dardanelles schemes, and indicated his preference for a great operation in the Baltic or for a general advance of the Army along the Belgian coast with strong naval support. Lord Fisher, say the Dardanelles Commissioners, "did not criticize the attack on the Gallipoli peninsula on its own merits. Neither did he mention to the Prime Minister that he had any thought of resigning if his opinions were overruled." This is quite true. I contended that both Zeebrugge and the Dardanelles scheme should be undertaken, but that if either were to be dropped it should be Zeebrugge, to which the First Sea Lord seemed more particularly opposed. The Prime Minister, after hearing both sides, expressed his concurrence with my



Photo F N A

TURKISH TRANSPORT CAMELS IN GALLIPOLI

The camel is not a particularly tractable beast, but as a transport animal it had few equals and no superiors during the operations against the Turks. Camels were not used by the British on Gallipoli, but were employed in large numbers in Sinai and Palestine. They gave wonderful service, were indifferent to shell fire and, owing to their noiseless movements, were of particular value in night operations.

views, and decided that Zeebrugge should be dropped but that the Dardanelles should go forward. Lord Fisher seemed on the whole content, and I went downstairs with him under the impression that all was well.

The War Council of January 28

The Council was already waiting Colonel Hankey's record of the discussion which followed has already been made public in the Report of the Dardanelles Commission.

"Mr Churchill said that he had communicated to the Grand Duke Nicholas and to the French Admiralty the project for a naval attack on the Dardanelles.

The Grand Duke had replied with enthusiasm, and believed that this [attack] might assist him. The French Admiralty had also sent a favourable reply, and had promised co-operation. Preparations were in hand for commencing about the middle of February. He asked if the War Council attached importance to this operation, which undoubtedly involved some risks?

"Lord Fisher said that he understood that this question would not be raised to-day. The Prime Minister was well aware of his own views in regard to it.



AT THE COOKHOUSE ON GALLI POLI

In the City of

Turkish orderlies drawing dinners for their companies. The Turkish soldier in addition to his fighting qualities possesses one other great military virtue in being able to march and exist upon very little food. On more than one occasion during the Great War he was required to perform feats which called for more than ordinary endurance in circumstances which meant marching light with but little to eat. Rich did he fail? One such instance was the desert march across Sinai in the summer heat of 1916 against the British position at Romani: a weary march of many days, a pitched battle and a return journey after defeat.

"The Prime Minister said that, in view of the steps which had already been taken, the question could not well be left in abeyance.

"Lord Kitchener considered the naval attack to be vitally important. If successful, its effect would be equivalent to that of a successful campaign fought with the new armies. One merit of the scheme was that, if satisfactory progress was not made, the attack could be broken off.

"Mr Balfour pointed out that a successful attack on the Dardanelles would achieve the following results —

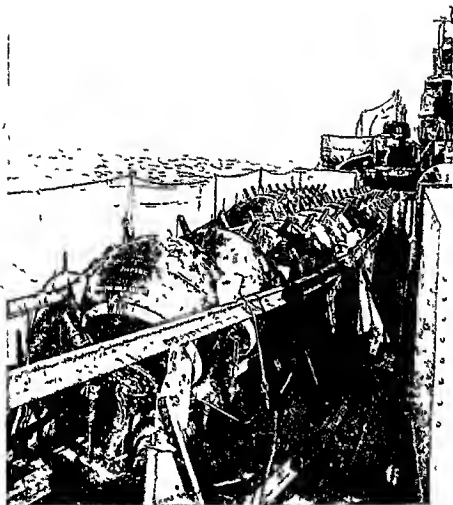


Photo Imperial War Museum

A DANGEROUS CARGO

The men employed on mine-laying vessels during the war followed a dangerous calling. As may be imagined the job of handling mines of heavy weight each packed with high explosive is one demanding both skill and care. Actually the risk of accident is diminished by packing the mines with wet gun cotton as this agent is not so easily detonated as are some high explosives. The mines are sewn by means of rails down which they are rolled and projected into the sea clear of the rudder and propellers.

"It would cut the Turkish Army in two,

"It would put Constantinople under our control,

"It would give us the advantage of having the Russian wheat, and enable Russia to resume exports,

"This would restore the Russian exchanges, which were falling owing to her inability to export,

his inquiries, the French had expressed their confidence that Austrian submarines would not get as far as the Dardanelles.

"Lord Haldane asked if the Turks had any submarines.

"Mr Churchill said that, so far as could be ascertained, they had not. He did not anticipate that we should sustain much loss in the actual bombardment,

and causing great embarrassment. It would also open a passage to the Dardanelles. It was difficult to imagine a more helpful operation.

"Sir Edward Grey said it would also finally settle the attitude of Bulgaria and the whole of the Balkans.

"Mr Churchill said that the naval Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean had expressed his belief that it could be done. He required from three weeks to a month to accomplish it. The necessary ships were already on their way to the Dardanelles. In reply to Mr Balfour, he said that, in response to

but in sweeping for mines some losses must be expected. The real difficulties would begin after the outer forts had been silenced, and it became necessary to attack the Narrows. He explained the plan of attack on a map."

Lord Fisher's Behaviour

This record does not, however, complete the story. During the Council an incident occurred which has subsequently obtained much publicity. Here is Lord Fisher's own account¹—

9th Meeting of War Council, January 28, 1915, 11.30 a.m.

(Note—Before this meeting the Prime Minister discussed with Mr. Churchill and Lord Fisher the proposed Dardanelles operations and decided in favour of considering the project in opposition to Lord Fisher's opinion.)

¹ *Memories* by Lord Fisher, p. 80

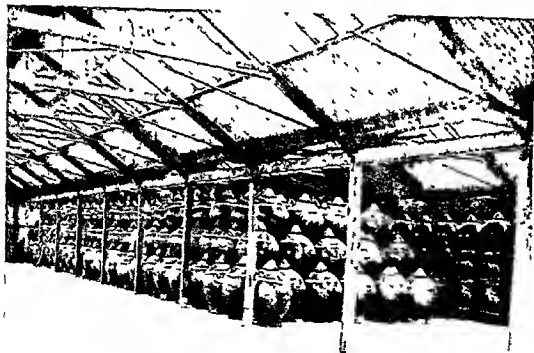
THE DARDANELLES

Mr. Churchill asked if the War Council attached importance to the proposed Dardanelles operations, which undoubtedly involved risks.

Lord Fisher said that he had understood that this question was not to be raised at this meeting. The Prime Minister knew his (Lord Fisher's) views on the subject.

The Prime Minister said that, in view of what had already been done, the question could not be left in abeyance.

(Note—Thereupon Lord Fisher left the Council table. He was followed by Lord Kitchener, who asked him what he intended to do. Lord Fisher replied to Lord Kitchener that he would not return to the Council table, and would resign his office as First Sea Lord. Lord Kitchener then pointed out to Lord Fisher that he (Lord Fisher) was the



IN A MINE STORE

Photo Imperial War Museum

Here stacked in rows like so many Dutch cheeses are sufficient engines of death to destroy an armada. These mines are of the buoyant type which are anchored to the sea bottom, the mine itself riding about twelve feet beneath the surface. Each mine is packed with about 100 lbs of wet gun cotton.

only dissentient, and that the Dardanelles operations had been decided upon by the Prime Minister, and he urged on Lord Fisher that his duty to his country was to go on carrying out the duties of First Sea Lord. After further talk Lord Fisher reluctantly gave in to Lord Kitchener and went back to the Council table.)

It must be emphasized here as well as in regard to Lord Kitchener's statement to the War Council dated May 14, 1915, that Lord Fisher considered that it would be both improper and unseemly for him to enter into an altercation either at the War Council or elsewhere with his chief Mr. Churchill, the First Lord. Silence or resignation was the right course.

His Final Consent

After the meeting was over, we adjourned for several hours. Although the War Council had come to a decision with which I heartily agreed, and no voice had been raised against the naval plan, I thought I must come to a clear understanding with the First Sea Lord. I had noticed the incident of his leaving the table and Lord Kitchener following him to the window and arguing with him, and I did not know what was the upshot in his mind. After luncheon I asked him to come and see me in my room and we had a long talk. I strongly urged him not to turn back from the Dardanelles operation, and in the end, after a long and very friendly discussion which covered the whole Admiralty and naval position, he definitely consented to undertake it.

There never has been any dispute between us subsequently as to this. "When I finally decided to go in," said Lord Fisher to the Dardanelles Commissioners, "I went the whole hog, *totus porcus*." We then repaired to the afternoon War Council Meeting, Admiral Oliver, Chief of the Staff, coming with us, and I announced on behalf of the Admiralty, and with the agreement of Lord Fisher, that we had decided to undertake the task with which the War Council had charged us so urgently. This I took as the point of final decision. After it, I never looked back. We had

left the region of discussion and consultation, of balancing and misgivings. The matter had passed into the domain of action.

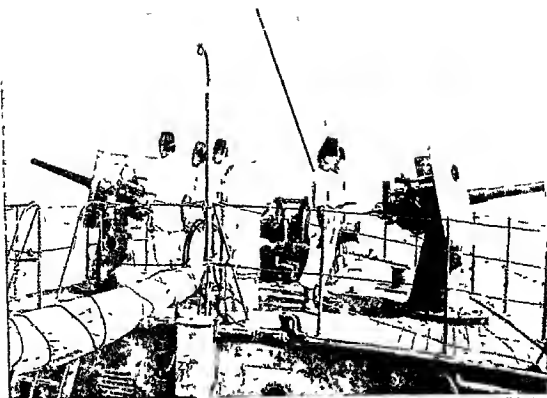
I am in no way concealing the great and continuous pressure which I put upon the old Admiral. This pressure was reinforced by Lord Kitchener's personal influence, by the collective opinion of the War Council, and by the authoritative decision of the Prime Minister. It was a pressure not only of opinion, which was overwhelming, but of arguments to which he could find no answer. Moreover, there was in addition on the technical side a very great weight of support at the Admiralty. "Naval opinion was unanimous," said Lord Fisher afterwards, "Mr. Churchill had them all on his side. I was the only rebel."

Was it wrong to put this pressure upon the First Sea Lord? I cannot think so. War is a business of terrible pressures, and persons who take part in it must fail if they are not strong enough to withstand them. As a mere politician and civilian, I would never have agreed to the Dardanelles project if I had not believed in it. I would have done my utmost to break it down in argument and to marshal opinion against it. Had I been in Lord Fisher's position and held his views, I would have refused point-blank. There was no need for him to resign. Only the First Sea Lord can order the ships to steam and the guns to fire. First Sea Lords have to stand up to facts and take their decisions resolutely at the moment of choice. To go back on a decision after an enterprise has been launched, risks run and sacrifices made, is quite a different matter. During the period of choice, a man must fight for his opinion with the utmost tenacity. But once the choice has been made, then the business must be carried through in loyal comradeship.

* * * *

The Passive Hypothesis

I have asked myself in these later years, What would have happened if I had taken Lord Fisher's advice and refused point-blank to take any action at the Dardanelles unless or until the

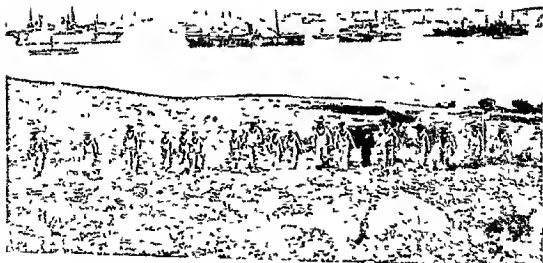


TURKISH GUNNERS AT PRACTICE

Photo F A 1

The Turkish Navy was a factor of relatively little account during the Great War. The British Naval Mission under Admiral Limpus was withdrawn early in the war, and thereafter such ships as the Turks possessed being penned up within the Sea of Marmora little was accomplished by this force. Under the Treaty of Sévres the Turkish Navy was abolished altogether.

71



MUDROS BAY

Photo Imperial War Museum

A familiar sight to all those who fought at the Dardanelles—the almost entirely land-locked bay of Mudros with its boom at the entrance provided a secure anchorage for the Allied Fleets and transports. In addition the island itself speedily assumed the appearance of an army base complete with hospitals and piles of stores of every kind.

War Office produced on their responsibility an adequate army to storm the Gallipoli Peninsula? Should we by holding out in this way have secured a sufficient army and a good plan? Should we have had all the advantages of the Dardanelles policy without the mistakes and misfortunes for which we had to pay so dearly?

The Dardanelles Commissioners, studying the story from an entirely different angle, obviously felt that if there had been no naval plan in the field, there would later on have been a really well-conceived and well-concerted amphibious attack. No one can probe this imaginary situation very far, and it is impossible to pronounce. But I think myself that nothing less than the ocular demonstration and practical proof of the strategic meaning of the Dardanelles, and the effects of attacking it on every Balkan and Mediterranean Power, would have lighted up men's minds sufficiently to make a large abstraction of troops from the main theatre a possibility.

I do not believe that anything less than those tremendous hopes, reinforced as they were by dire necessity, would have enabled Lord Kitchener to wrest an army from France and Flanders. In cold blood, it could never have been done. General Headquarters, and the French General Staff would have succeeded in shattering any plan put forward so long as it was a mere theoretical proposal for a large diversion of force to the southern theatre.

At one moment they would have told us that, owing to the Russian failure, great masses of Germans were returning to the west to deliver an overwhelming offensive at another that they could not spare a round of am-

munition and were in desperate straits for the want of it at a third, that they had a wonderful plan for a great offensive which would shatter the German line and drive them out of a large portion of France.

All these arguments were in fact used, and their effect was, as will be seen, to cripple the Dardanelles operations even after they had actually begun. How much more would they have overwhelmed any paper plan for an eastern campaign. There would have been no Dardanelles with its hopes, its glories, its losses and its ultimate heart-breaking failure.

But who shall say what would have happened instead? A few weeks' more delay in the entry of Italy into the war, and the continuance of the great Russian defeats in Galicia, would have rendered that entry improbable in the extreme. A few more months' acceleration of the Bulgarian declaration of war against us, and the whole of the Balkans, except Serbia, might have been rallied to the Teutonic standards. The flower of the Turkish Army, which was largely destroyed on the Gallipoli Peninsula, would certainly have fought us or our Allies somewhere else. The destruction of the Russian Army of the Caucasus could not have been long averted.

I do not believe that by adopting the negative attitude we should ever have got our good and well-conceived amphibious operation. We should have got no operation at all. We should have done nothing, and have been confronted with diplomatic and military reactions wholly unfavourable throughout the southern and eastern theatre. Searching my heart, I cannot regret the effort. It was good to go as far as we did.

Not to persevere—that was the crime

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE GENESIS OF THE MILITARY ATTACK

An Army After All—Lord Kitchener in the Tolls—Paralysis of the General Staff—East or West—Lord Kitchener's Many Burdens—His Courage and Kindness—The 29th Division—Naval Preparations—Quasi-political Factors—Decisions of February 16—Conflicting Pressures upon Lord Kitchener—The Day of Recoil—Councils of February 24 and 26—My Memorandum of February 25—And of February 27—Final Release of the 29th Division—Comments of the Dardanelles Commissioners

UP to this point in the story of the Dardanelles the War Council and the Admiralty had accepted unquestioningly the basis that no troops were available for offensive operations against Turkey

An Army After All

In his first letter to me of January 2, Lord Kitchener had said "We have no troops to land anywhere. We shall not be ready for anything big for some months." The first telegram to Admiral Carden of January 3 had asked "Are you of opinion that it is practicable to force the Dardanelles *using ships alone*?" At the evening meeting of the War Council on January 28 when the final decision was taken, Lord Kitchener repeated "We have at present no troops to spare." It was on that foundation alone that all our decisions in favour of a purely naval attack had been taken. But henceforward a series of new facts and pressures came into play which gradually but unceasingly changed the character and enormously extended the scale of the enterprise. Under these influences in less than two months the naval attack, with its lack of certainty but with its limited costs and risks, became subsidiary, and in its place there arose a military development of great magnitude. Over this new plan the Admiralty had no responsible control. Our advice did not

prevail, our criticisms were not welcomed, and even inquiries became a matter of delicacy and tact. Nevertheless, by the results of this military operation we had to stand or fall.

After all there was an Army. From the very moment when the purely naval attack had been finally resolved troops from many quarters began to come into view. From that moment the pressure to employ troops in one way or another grew steadily in every mind.

The decision to abandon or postpone indefinitely an advance along the Belgian coast liberated portions of the reinforcements destined for Sir John French. The feeble character of the Turkish attack on Egypt and its repulse liberated the greater part of the army concentrated there. The continued improvement in the training of the Australian and Territorial troops in this army increasingly fitted them for offensive operations. The suppression of the rebellion in South Africa had removed other anxieties. Meanwhile the First and Second of the New Armies (in all twelve divisions) were improving in training and progressing in equipment. A number of Territorial divisions fully equipped and in good order, whose training was now advanced, were also available at home. The large numbers of armed and organized soldiers in the United Kingdom should have removed all apprehension of overseas invasion.

At intervals during the next three

months there were actually ordered to the Dardanelles ———

From England

The 29th Division
Two first-line Territorial divisions
The Royal Naval Division
A Yeomanry mounted division

From Egypt

Two Australian divisions
One extra Australian brigade
The Lancashire Territorial Division
One Indian Brigade

From France

Two French divisions

All these troops were available for moving at this moment. The transport for their conveyance by sea could readily have been procured. All, or their equivalent, and more were subsequently sent. Together they comprised an army of at least 150,000 men. This army could have been concentrated in the Eastern Mediterranean in readiness to intervene at any point selected, some time before the end of March. If at any time in January it had been deliberately decided to use such an army, according to some good plan and with a resolute purpose, in a great combined operation to seize the Gallipoli Peninsula and thus open the passage for the Fleet, few will now doubt that a complete victory would have been gained.

On the other hand, apart from the 29th Division, all these troops had been raised or permanently embodied only since the outbreak of the war. To open a new campaign on a large scale was a most serious decision, in view of their partially trained character and of the general shortage of munitions. This was the justification for the naval attack. It also within its limits presented a logical and consistent scheme of war. Either plan was defensible. But for what happened there can be no defence except human infirmity. To drift into a new campaign piecemeal and without any definite decision or careful plan, would have been scouted by everyone. Yet so obliquely were these issues presented, so baffling were the personal factors involved, that the War

Council were drawn insensibly and irresistibly into the gulf

* * * *

Lord Kitchener in the Tolls

The workings of Lord Kitchener's mind constituted at this period a feature almost as puzzling as the great war problem itself. His prestige and authority were immense. He was the sole mouth-piece of War Office opinion in the War Council. Everyone had the greatest admiration for his character, and everyone felt fortified, amid the terrible and incalculable events of the opening months of the war, by his commanding presence. When he gave a decision it was invariably accepted as final. He was never, to my belief, overruled by the War Council or the Cabinet in any military matter, great or small. No single unit was ever sent or withheld contrary, not merely to his agreement, but to his advice. Scarcely anyone ever ventured to argue with him in Council. Respect for the man, sympathy for him in his immense labours, confidence in his professional judgment, and the belief that he had plans deeper and wider than any we could see, silenced misgivings and disputes, whether in the Council or at the War Office. All-powerful, imperturbable, reserved, he dominated absolutely our counsels at this time in all that concerned the organization and employment of the armies.

Yet behind this imposing and splendid front lay many weaknesses, evidences of which became increasingly disquieting. The Secretary of State for War had burdens laid upon him which no man, no three men even of his great capacity, could properly discharge. He had absorbed the whole War Office into his spacious personality. The General Staff was completely in abeyance, save as a machine for supplying him with information. Even as such a machine it was woefully weak.

Paralysis of the General Staff

All the ablest officers and leading and strongest minds in the General Staff and Army Council, with the exception of Sir John Cowans, the Quartermaster-General, had hurried eagerly out of the country

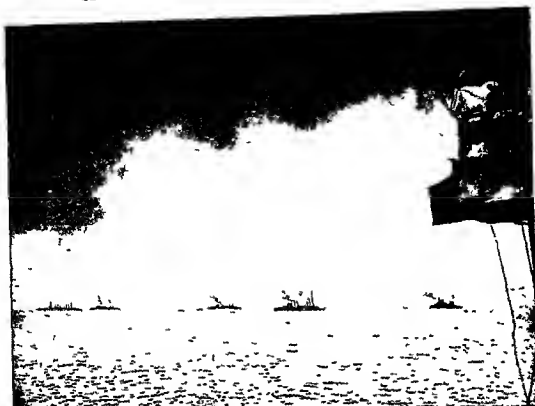


Photo Copyright

BRITISH AND FRENCH CRUISERS AT THE DARDANELLES

The photograph reproduced above taken from one of the ships of the Allied Fleet at the Dardanelles shows the British and French cruisers moving into position for the bombardment of the outer forts

with the Expeditionary Force and were now in France, feeling that they ought to control the whole conduct of the war from the highly localized point of view of the British General Headquarters at St Omer. In their place, filling vitally important situations, were officers on the retired list or men whose opinions had never counted weightily in British military thought. These officers were petrified by Lord Kitchener's personality and position. They none of them showed the natural force and ability to argue questions out with him vigorously as man to man. He towered up in his uniform as a Field-Marshal and Cabinet Minister besides, and they saluted as subordinates on a drill-ground. They never presented him with well-considered general reasonings about the whole course of the war. They stood ready to execute his decisions to the best of their ability.

It was left to the Members of the War Council to write papers upon the broad strategic view of the war. It was left to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr

Lloyd George, to discern and proclaim to the Cabinet in unmistakable terms the impending military collapse of Russia. It was left to me to offer at any rate one method of influencing the political situation in the Near East in default of comprehensive military schemes. And Lord Kitchener himself was left to face the rushing, swirling torrent of events with no rock of clear, well-thought-out doctrine and calculation at his back.

In consequence he gave decisions now in this direction, now in that, which were markedly influenced by the daily impressions he sustained which impressions were often of a fleeting nature. As a result his decisions were sometimes contradictory. He was torn between two perfectly clear-cut views of the war, both urged upon him with force and passion, with wealth of fact and argument.

East or West

All the leading soldiers in the British Army, all the august authority



Photo Elliott & Fry

GENERAL SIR JOHN COWANS

Quartermaster-General of the British Army during the Great War. Sir John Cowans entered the service in 1881, receiving a commission in the Rifle Brigade. In the years that followed he held many important military appointments, being Director-General of military education in India and later from 1910-12 Director-General of the Territorial Force. In 1912 he became Quartermaster-General and was made a member of the Army Council.

of the French High Command, asserted that the sole path to victory lay in sending every single man and gun and shell to the French Front to "kill Germans" and break their lines in the west. All the opinion of the War Council, which certainly contained men who had established themselves as the leading figures of the public life of their generation, was focused upon the southern and eastern theatre as the scene for the campaign of 1915. Kitchener himself was strongly drawn in this direction by his own eastern interest and knowledge. He saw to the full the vision of what success in this quarter would mean, but he also felt what we did not feel in

the same degree—the fearful alternative pressure to which he was continually subjected from the French Front.

The problem was not insoluble. The task of reconciling these apparently opposed conceptions was not impossible. A well-conceived and elaborated plan and programme could have been devised in January for action in the Near East in March, April, May or even June, and for a subsequent great concentration and operation on the Western Front in the autumn of 1915, or better still under far more favourable conditions in the spring of 1916. The successive development of both policies in their proper sequence and each in its integrity was perfectly feasible if the great authorities concerned could have been won over. However, in the event Lord Kitchener succumbed to conflicting forces and competing policies.

Lord Kitchener's Many Burdens

Beside these trials and burdens, to which he was certainly not able to rise

superior, stood the whole vast business of recruiting, organizing and equipping the New Armies, and behind this again there now marched steadily into view a series of problems connected with the manufacture and purchase of munitions upon a scale never dreamed of by any human being up till this period. These problems comprised the entire social and industrial life of the country and touched the whole economic and financial system of the world. Add to this the daily exposition of all military business in Cabinet and in Council—a process most trying and burdensome to Lord Kitchener, and one in which he felt himself at a disadvantage—add, further,

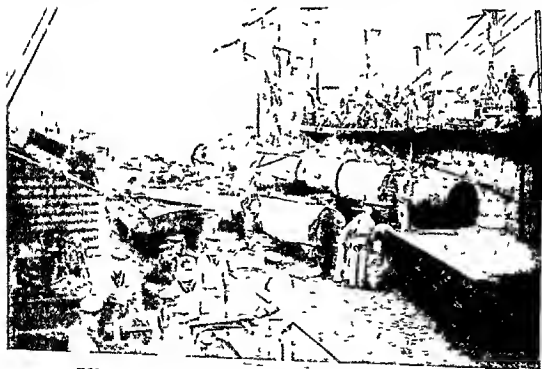
the continuous series of decisions upon executive matters covering the vast field of the war, including important operations and expeditions which were campaigns in themselves, and it will be realized that the strain that descended upon the King's greatest subject was far more than mortal man could bear.

It must, however, be stated that Lord Kitchener in no way sought to lighten these terrific burdens. On the contrary, he resented promptly any attempt to interfere in and even scrutinize his vast domains of responsibility. He resisted tenaciously the efforts which were made from January onwards to remove the production of munitions of all kinds from his control as Secretary of State. He devolved on to subordinates as little as he could. He sought to manage the Great War by the same sort of personal control that he had used with so much success in the command of the tiny Nile Expedition. He kept the General Staff, or what was left of it, in a condition of complete subservience and practical

abeyance. He even reached out, as his Cabinet Office justified, into political spheres in questions of Ireland, of Temperance, and of Industrial Organization.

His Courage and Kindness

It is idle at this date to affect to disregard or conceal these facts. Indeed, the greatness of Lord Kitchener and his lasting claims upon the respect and gratitude of succeeding generations of his fellow-countrymen, for whose cause and safety he fought with single-hearted purpose and a giant's strength, will only be fortified by the fullest comprehension of his character and of his difficulties. If this story and the facts and documents on which it rests constitute any reflection upon his military policy, I must also testify to the overwhelming weight of the burdens laid upon him, to his extraordinary patience and courage in all the difficulties and perplexities through which we were passing, and



EQUIPPING OLD BATTLESHIPS FOR THE DARDANELLES

Photo Credit

When preparations were under way for the attack upon the Dardanelles, certain battleships which had been considered obsolete for normal duties with the Grand Fleet were pressed into service. These ships, many of which were ready for breaking up, were fitted with new 12 inch guns and sent to join the fleet in the Aegean. These old vessels proved themselves in every way suited to their task and had the attack been pressed with more vigour and with less regard for the safety of ships which were practically useless for any other purpose it can hardly be doubted that complete penetration of the Narrows would have been achieved.

to his unvarying kindness and courtesy to me

* * * *

The 29th Division

The War Council of January 28, besides deciding definitely and finally in favour of the naval attempt upon the Dardanelles, showed itself earnestly desirous of procuring some military force to influence the political situation in the Balkans. It was not thought at this time that any force which could be collected would be equal to the storming of the Gallipoli Peninsula, and this operation never received the slightest countenance at this juncture. All that was hoped for was to secure the subtraction from the forces in England, but destined for France, of one or two divisions, including the 29th Division (our remaining Regular Division), and the employment of this force as a lever to encourage M. Venizelos and the Greek King and Government to enter the war on our side in aid of Serbia.

After much discussion with Sir John French, the War Council of February 9 decided to offer the 29th Division (which was still in England) to Greece, together with a French division, if she would join the Allies. I thought that this offer, taken by itself and apart from any effects which might result from the naval attack on the Dardanelles, was wholly inadequate. I did not believe that Greece, and still less Bulgaria, would be influenced by the prospects of such very limited aid. Indeed, the eviguous dimensions of the assistance were in themselves a confession of our weakness. This view was justified, and the offer was promptly declined by M. Venizelos.

* * * *

Naval Preparations

Meanwhile the preparations for the naval attack had been steadily moving forward. All the ships assigned to the task were already on the spot or approaching it. By an informal arrangement with M. Venizelos the island of Lemnos, containing the spacious harbour of Mudros, had been placed at our disposal as a base for the assembling

Fleet, and two battalions of Marines from the Royal Naval Division had already been dispatched thither. The sole object of this small force was to provide landing parties for Admiral Carden's Fleet, in case during his operations the opportunity should offer of destroying guns or forts already disabled in parts of the Gallipoli Peninsula where the enemy's resistance had virtually ceased. But once it began to be realized that troops in considerable numbers were becoming available, Sir Henry Jackson and Lord Fisher began to press for their employment in the Dardanelles operation.

"The provision of the necessary military forces," wrote Sir Henry Jackson on February 14, "to enable the fruits of this heavy naval undertaking to be gathered must never be lost sight of, the transports carrying them should be in readiness to enter the Straits as soon as it is seen the forts at the Narrows will be silenced. The naval bombardment is not recommended as a sound military operation, unless a strong military force is ready to assist in the operation, or, at least, follow it up immediately the forts are silenced." There was much mixed thinking in this. The difference between "assisting in the operation" and "following it up immediately the forts are silenced" was fundamental. Fisher on the other hand was perfectly clear. He wanted the Gallipoli Peninsula stormed and held by the Army. This idea neither Lord Kitchener nor the War Council would at this time have entertained.

"I hope you were successful with Kitchener," wrote the First Sea Lord to me on the evening of February 16, "in getting divisions sent to Lemnos to-morrow! Not a gram of wheat will come from the Black Sea unless there is military occupation of the Dardanelles, and it will be the wonder of the ages that no troops were sent to co-operate with the Fleet with half a million soldiers in England.

"The war of lost opportunities!!! Why did Antwerp fall?"

"The Haslar boats might go at once to Lemnos, as somebody will land at Gallipoli some time or other."

Quasi-political Factors

I still adhered to the integrity of the naval plan. Knowing what I did of the military situation and of the state of our armies, I did not underrate the serious nature of a decision to commit British troops to severe and indefinite fighting with the Turks on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

I had of course thought long and earnestly about what would follow if the naval attack succeeded and a British Fleet entered the Marmora. I expected that if, and when, the Turkish forts began to fall, the Greeks would join us, and that the whole of their armies would be at our disposal thenceforward. I hoped that the apparition of a British Fleet off Constantinople and the fight or destruction of the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* would be followed by political reactions of a far-reaching character, as the result of which the Turkish Government would negotiate or withdraw to Asia. I trusted that good diplomacy following hot-foot on a great war event, would induce Bulgaria to march on Adrianople. Lastly, I was sure that Russia, whatever her need elsewhere, would not remain indifferent to the fate of Constantinople and that further reinforcements would be forthcoming from her.

It was on these quasi-political factors that I counted in our own military penury, for the means of exploiting and consolidating any success which might fall to the Fleet. The reader will see how far these speculations appear to have been well founded.

But of course, if after all Lord Kitchener and the War Council saw their way to form a substantial British army in the East, the prospects of a great and successful combination were vastly more hopeful. Such an army assembled in Egypt and the Greek islands might well be the motor muscle which would decide and animate all the rest. It could either seize the Isthmus of Bular if the Turks evacuated the Peninsula after the Fleet had passed the Straits, or if a Convention was made with Turkey, it could occupy Constantinople promptly. Incidentally, if landing parties on a larger scale were needed during the passage of the Fleet, they could be

supplied from this source. Thus a considerable unity was established on the immediate step of sending troops to the East between persons who on the further steps held very different views.

Amid the conflicting opinions, competing plans and shifting exigencies of the situation, the desirability of concentrating the largest possible army in the eastern Mediterranean with extreme promptitude, and placing at its head a supreme general, seemed to all of us at the Admiralty to be obvious. Therefore we at all times, in all discussions, supported everything that would promote and expedite this concentration.

Decisions of February 16

February 16 was a Day of Resolve. At a meeting of the principal Ministers on the War Council, including the Prime Minister, Lord Kitchener and myself, the following decisions, eventually incorporated in the Decisions of the War Council, were taken —

(1) The 29th Division to be dispatched to Lemnos at the earliest possible date, preferably within nine or ten days.

(2) Arrangements to be made to send a force from Egypt, if required.

(3) The whole of the above forces, with the Royal Marine battalions already dispatched, to be available in case of necessity to support the naval attack on the Dardanelles.

(4) Horse-boats to be taken out with the 29th Division, and the Admiralty to make arrangements to collect small craft, tugs and lighters in the Levant.

The decision of February 16 is the foundation of the military attack upon the Dardanelles. "It had not," say the Dardanelles Commissioners, "been definitely decided to use troops on a large scale, but they were to be massed so as to be in readiness should their assistance be required." On this day Admiral Carden was informed that Mudros harbour could be used by him as a base, and Rear-Admiral Wemyss was appointed as senior naval officer there. In the evening of the 16th in pursuance of the decisions which had been taken, I directed Admiral Oliver, Chief of the War Staff, to have transports collected with the utmost speed for the 29th Division, and he issued

orders to this effect on the same day. The resolve to concentrate an army undoubtedly carried with it acceptance of the possibility of using it in certain eventualities. But these were not as yet defined.

Conflicting Pressures upon Lord Kitchener

During the 17th it appeared that great pressure was being put upon Lord Kitchener from General Headquarters not to divert the 29th Division from France. In fact, as has been justly observed by the Official Naval Historian, the use of the 29th Division became a cardinal issue between what were beginning to be called in our secret circles "The Western" and "The Eastern" policies. Lord Kitchener became the prey of these contending opinions and forces, and he was plunged into a state of most painful indecision between them.

So far, not a shot had been fired at the Dardanelles, but we were on the eve of the attack on the outer forts. When we met in Council again on the 19th, it became clear that Lord Kitchener had changed his mind. He informed us that he could not consent to the dispatch of the 29th Division to the East. He gave as his reason the dangerous weakness of Russia and his fear lest large masses of

German troops should be brought back from the Russian Front to attack our troops in France. I cannot believe that this argument had really weighed with him. He must have known that, apart from all other improbabilities, it was physically impossible for the Germans to transport great armies from Russia to the French Front under two or three months at the very least, and that the 29th Division—one single division—could not affect the issue appreciably if they did so. He used the argument to fortify a decision which he had arrived at after a most painful heart-searching on other and general grounds.

The Council bowed to Lord Kitchener's will, though its wishes and opinions were unaltered. It was decided to postpone the departure of the 29th Division, but the Admiralty was instructed nevertheless to continue the preparation of transports for it and other troops. On the 20th I minuted to the Director of Transports: "All preparations are to be made to embark the 29th Division with the least possible delay. The dispatch of this division is not, however, finally decided."

The Day of Recoil

The 20th was a day of Recoil. Lord Kitchener had refused to send the 29th

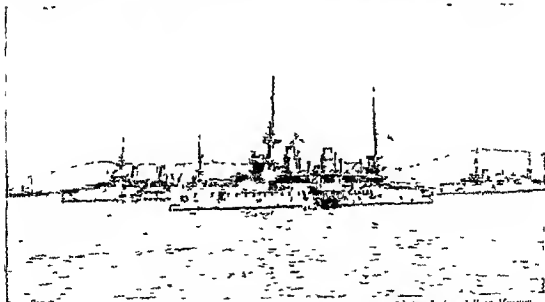


Photo Imperial War Museum

FRENCH BATTLESHIPS IN MUDROS BAY

Three of the French ships which took part in the operations at the Dardanelles. From left to right these are *St. Louis*, *Charlemagne* and *Suffren*. The two last named were in action on February 19 in the attack upon the outer forts.

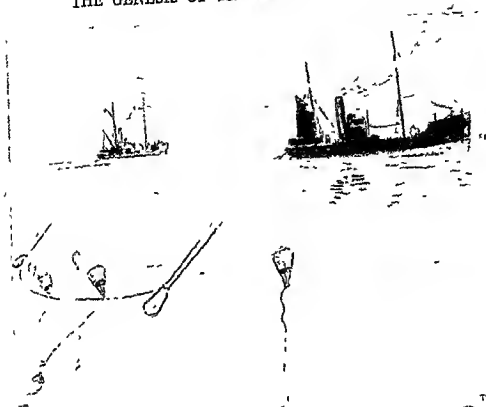
*Drawing Edwards*

DIAGRAM SHOWING HOW TRAWLERS SWEEP FOR MINES

The work of mine sweeping is often dangerous in the extreme and the comparatively small number of casualties sustained during the war must be attributed to the great skill with which the crews of the mine sweepers carried out their task. Here two trawlers, steaming abreast on a parallel course are seen with the trawling gear in operation. The gear consists of a weighted steel wire hawser which, towed under the water by the two trawlers, fouls the mines and breaks their moorings. The mines rising to the surface are destroyed by gun or rifle-fire.

Division. He even seemed opposed to any large concentration of troops in the East. "The French," he wrote to me (February 20), "are in a great way about so many troops being employed as you told them of. I have just seen Grey and hope we shall not be saddled with a French contingent for the Dardanelles." He deprecated my gathering transports at Alexandria for 40,000 men as a precautionary measure, to which he had previously assented. He went further. He sent his Aide-de-Camp, the brave and accomplished Colonel Fitzgerald, over to the First Sea Lord and the Admiralty Transport Department to say that the 29th Division was not to go. The First Sea Lord and the Director of Naval Transport thereupon assumed that the question had been finally settled by agreement between Lord Kitchener and me. The orders

for the collection and fitting of the transports for this Division, which had been operative since the 16th, were accordingly cancelled, and the whole fleet of twenty-two vessels was released for other duties and dispersed without my being informed.

Councils of February 24 and 26

The discussion was resumed on February 24 and 26, but we now met under the impression of the actual attack on the Dardanelles. The bombardment of the outer forts had begun on February 19, and although the operations had been interrupted by bad weather a favourable impression had been sustained. Moreover, open action had now been taken. If the 16th had been a day of Resolve, and the 20th a day of Recoil, the 24th and 26th were days of Compromise and Half-measures.

THE GREAT WAR



GENERAL SIR WILLIAM BIRDWOOD

Photo Elliott & Fry

The famous Commander of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps on Gallipoli Birdwood entered the army in 1883. He served first with the Royal Scots Fusiliers and three years later transferred to the 11th Bengal Lancers. He devoted many years of his career to the service of India, service interrupted only by the South African War and the Great War. He was severely wounded in South Africa and in the Great War he was appointed in 1918 to the command of the Fifth Army.

On the 24th Lord Kitchener said that he "felt that if the Fleet could not get through the Straits unaided the Army ought to see the business through. The effect of a defeat in the Orient would be very serious. There could be no going back." Thus, at a stroke, the idea of discarding the naval attack, if it proved too difficult, and turning to some other objective, was abandoned and the possibility of a great military enterprise seemed to be accepted.

and engage the enemy forces covering them, our main army can remain in camp at Lemnos till the passage of the Straits is in our hands, when holding Bular lines may be necessary to stop all supplies reaching the peninsula. You should discuss this operation with General Birdwood on his arrival before deciding any major operations beyond covering range of ships' guns and report conclusions arrived at." Yet two days later, on February 26, Lord Kitchener

On this I again argued strenuously, both on the 24th and on the 26th, for the dispatch of the 29th Division, and I used to the full the hopes and interest which the naval attack was increasingly exciting.

Lord Kitchener, notwithstanding his pronouncement, adhered to his refusal. He had sent General Birdwood, an officer whom he knew well, and in whom he rightly had confidence, from Egypt (where he was commanding the Australian Army Corps) to the Dardanelles to report on the prospects and possibilities of military action. On February 24 the War Office requested the Admiralty to send the following telegram, which was drafted by Sir Henry Jackson, to Admiral Carden —

"The War Office consider the occupation of the Southern end of the peninsula to the line Suandere-Chana Ovasi as not an obligatory operation for ensuring success of the first main object which is to destroy the permanent batteries. Though troops should always be held in readiness to assist in minor operations on both sides of the Straits in order to destroy masked batteries

authorized General Birdwood to draw upon the Australasian Army Corps "up to the total limit of its strength" for the purpose of aiding the Fleet.

All these half-measures, which nevertheless were assuming serious proportions and marked a change in the whole character of the operation, appeared so perilous to me that at the Council on the 26th I formally disclaimed responsibility for the consequences of any military operations that might arise. My disclaimer was entered in the records. Then the Prime Minister, making a marked intervention, appealed most strongly to Lord Kitchener not to allow the force available in the East to be deprived of the one Regular Division so necessary to its effective composition.

It was useless. After the Council I waited behind. I knew the Prime Minister agreed with me, and indeed the whole Council, with the exception of

Lord Kitchener, were of one mind. I urged the Prime Minister to make his authority effective and to insist upon the dispatch of the 29th Division to Lemnos or Alexandria. I felt at that moment in an intense way a foreboding of disaster. I knew it was a turning-point in the struggle, as surely as I know now that the consequences are graven on the monuments of history. The Prime Minister did not feel that anything more could be done. He had done his best to persuade Lord Kitchener. He could not overrule him or force his resignation upon a question like this, for the whole military opinion of the General Staff and of the French authorities would be upon his side.

My Memorandum of February 25

On February 25 I had prepared an appreciation of the general situation and I had used this to argue from in the War Council of the 26th. It was now printed.



BEFORE SAILING FOR THE DARDANILLES

Photo Coll.

Admiral Sir Henry Oliver is seen here being piped aboard the *Queen Elizabeth* shortly before the new super Dreadnought sailed for the Dardanelles. He is being received by Admiral de Robeck (second from the right) the newly appointed second-in command to Admiral Carden.

and circulated to the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Mr Balfour. I reprint it here as it explains my position more clearly than any other document of this period.

APPRECIATION

1 *Russia*—We must not expect Russia to invade Germany successfully for many months to come. But though the Russian offensive is paralysed, we may count on her not only maintaining a successful defensive, but effectively containing and retaining very large German forces on her front. There is no reason to believe that Germany will be able to transfer to the West anything like 1,000,000 men at any time, nor anyhow that German forces large enough to influence the situation can arrive in the West before the middle of April.

2 The Anglo-French lines in the West are very strong, and cannot be turned. Our position and forces in France are incomparably stronger than at the beginning of the war, when we had opposed to us nearly three-fourths of the first line of the German Army. We ought to welcome a German assault on the largest possible scale. The chances of repulsing it would be strong in our favour, and even if its success necessitated retirement to another line, the superior losses of the Germans would afford good compensation. The issue in the West in the next three months ought not to cause anxiety. But, anyhow, it is not an issue which could be decisively affected by four or five British divisions.

3 For us the decisive point, and the only point where the initiative can be seized and maintained, is in the Balkan Peninsula. With proper military and naval co-operation, and with forces which are available, we can make certain of taking Constantinople by the end of March, and capturing or destroying all Turkish forces in Europe (except those in Adrianople). This blow can be struck before the fate of Serbia is decided. Its effect on the whole of the Balkans will be decisive. It will eliminate Turkey as a military factor.

4 The following military forces (at least) are available immediately —

		Men
In England	29th Division	36,000
	Another Territorial Division	
Under orders for Lemnos		R N
Division		12,000
From Egypt	2 Australian Divisions	39,000
French Division	(say)	20,000
Russian Brigade	(say)	8,000
Total		115,000

5 All these troops are capable of being concentrated within striking distance of the Bulair Isthmus by March 21 if orders are given now. If the naval operations have not succeeded by then, they can be used to attack the Gallipoli Peninsula and make sure that the Fleet gets through. As soon as the Dardanelles are open, they can either (a) operate from Constantinople to extirpate any Turkish forces in Europe, or (b) if Bulgaria comes in at our invitation to occupy up to the Enos-Midia line, they can proceed through Bulgaria to the aid of Serbia, or (c) if Bulgaria is merely confirmed in a friendly neutrality, but Greece comes in, they can proceed through Salonika to the aid of Serbia.

W S C

February 25, 1915

And of February 27

And on the 27th —

"I must now put on record my opinion that the military force provided, viz two Australasian divisions supported by the nine naval battalions and the French divisions, is not large enough for the work it may have to do, and that the absence of any British regular troops will, if fighting occurs, expose the naval battalions and the Australians to undue risk.

"Even if the Navy succeed unaided in forcing the passage, the weakness of the military force may compel us to forgo a large part of the advantages which would otherwise follow."

I still hoped after the meeting of the 26th that in a day or two Lord Kitchener's mood would change, that the Prime Minister would manage to bring him round to the general view, and that the

29th Division would be allowed to start. The War Council, while deferring to his decision, had decided that the transports were still to be held together in readiness for it. After the meeting of the 26th was over I inquired from the Transport Department as to what exact state of preparation the transports were in, expecting to find that they were ready. I then learned that on the 20th they had been countermanded and were now utterly dispersed. I was staggered at this, and wrote at once to Lord Kitchener in protest.

I immediately renewed the orders to the Transport Department, but it was not found possible to reassemble and fit the necessary vessels before March 16.

Final Release of the 29th Division.

The actual opening of the bombardment and the success of the Navy at the outer forts, which will be described in the next chapter, induced a further change of view. "Another meeting of the War Council," to quote the report of the Dardanelles Commission, "was held on March 3. By this time Lord Kitchener's opposition to the dispatch of the 29th Division had apparently weakened. On the question being raised by Mr. Churchill he said that he proposed to leave the question open until March 10, when he hoped to have heard from General Birdwood." General Birdwood, however, arrived at the Dardanelles before the 10th. On the 5th he telegraphed to Lord Kitchener: "I am very doubtful if the Navy can force the passage unassisted."

This was followed on the 6th by a telegram to the following effect: "I have already informed you that I consider the Admiral's forecast is too sanguine, and though we may have a better estimate by March 12, I doubt his ability to force the passage unaided." On March 10, Lord Kitchener, being then somewhat reassured as regards the position in other theatres of war, and being also possibly impressed by General Birdwood's reports, announced to the War Council that "he felt that the situation was now sufficiently secure to justify the despatch of the 29th Division."

"The decision of February 16, the execution of which had been suspended on the 20th, again became operative on March 10. In the meanwhile, three weeks of valuable time had been lost. The transports, which might have left on February 22, did not get away till March 16."

When Lord Kitchener had decided in his heart that if the Navy failed to force the Dardanelles, he would storm the Gallipoli Peninsula, he ought to have declared it to his colleagues. Failing thus he should at any rate have so moved and organized his troops as to leave the different alternatives of action open to him. Most of all should he have set his General Staff to work out plans for the various contingencies which were now plainly coming into view.

Comments of the Dardanelles Commissioners

"From the time the decision of February 16 was taken," say the Dardanelles Commissioners, "there were really only two alternatives which were thoroughly defensible. One was to accept the view that by reason of our existing commitments elsewhere an adequate force could not be made available for expeditionary action in the eastern Mediterranean, to face the possible loss of prestige which would have been involved in an acknowledgment of partial failure, and to have fallen back on the original plan of abandoning the naval attack on the Dardanelles, when once it became apparent that military operations on a large scale would be necessary. The other was to have boldly faced the risks which would have been involved elsewhere and at once to have made a determined effort to force the passage of the Dardanelles by a rapid and well-organized combined attack in great strength. Unfortunately, the Government adopted neither of these courses. We think that Mr. Churchill was quite justified in attaching the utmost importance to the delays which occurred in despatching the 29th Division and the Territorial Division from this country."

CHAPTER XL

FALL OF THE OUTER FORTS AND THE SECOND GREEK OFFER

February 19—The Bombardment Opens—The Outer Forts Destroyed—Landing of Marines—Successful Conclusion of the First Phase—Increasing Prospects of Military Aid—Consequences of the Attack on the Dardanelles—Conservative Leaders invited to Conference—Effects of the Dardanelles upon the Balkan States—Hopes of Italian Intervention—March 7 The Second Greek Offer—Disastrous Character of Russian Action—King Constantine Rebuffed—Resignation of M. Venizelos

AT nine minutes to ten on the morning of February 19 the British and French fleets concentrated at the Dardanelles began the bombardment of the outer forts.¹ These forts were four in number and mounted nineteen primary guns. Of these all but four were old pattern short guns with a maximum range of 6,000 to 8,000 yards. Only the two pairs of 9.4-inch guns in the two smaller forts could fire above 11,000 yards. The whole of these defences therefore were exposed to bombardment from the ships at ranges to which they could make no effective reply.

February 19

The attacking fleet was formed into three divisions—

1ST DIVISION	2ND DIVISION	3RD DIVISION
<i>Inferrible</i>	<i>Vengeance</i>	<i>Suffren</i>
<i>Agamemnon</i>	<i>Albion</i>	<i>Bouvet</i>
<i>Queen</i>	<i>Cornwallis</i>	<i>Charlemagne</i>
<i>Elizabeth</i>	<i>Irresistible</i>	<i>Gaulois</i>
	<i>Triumph</i>	

These vessels mounted 178 guns of 5½-inch and upwards, for the most part more modern than those in the forts, heavier and capable of outranging them in every class of gun. The operations which ensued are minutely described in the Official Naval History, the manoeuvres of every ship and the results of almost every shot being carefully set

The map facing page 535 will be found relevant to this chapter

out. It is not intended to repeat this here.

The Bombardment Opens

The attack was to have been divided into two parts: first, a long-range bombardment, and, second, overwhelming the forts at short range and sweeping a channel towards the entrance of the Straits. Ammunition was sparingly used and at first the ships were kept under way. It soon became evident that the moving ships could not achieve sufficient accuracy of fire, and at 10.30 all were ordered to anchor in positions outside the enemy's range which enabled one ship to observe from a different angle the fire of another.

By 2 o'clock it was considered that the effect of the slow long-range bombardment was sufficient to enable the closer attack to be made, and the bombarding vessels closed to about 6,000 yards. Up till this time no fort had replied to the fire. But at 4.45 p.m. on the *Suffren*, *Vengeance* and *Cornwallis* advancing to within 5,000 yards range, the two smaller forts with their modern guns came into action, showing that their guns had not been damaged by the long-range firing. The *Vengeance* and *Cornwallis*, reinforced by the *Agamemnon*, *Inferrible* and *Gaulois*, returned the fire, temporarily silencing one of the forts. Rear-Admiral de Robeck, the second in command, whose flag was flying in the *Vengeance* wished to continue the action at close range,



A NAVAL REHEARSAL

The Crew

An operation such as the landing of an army on the shores of the Gallipoli Peninsula necessitates a vast amount of organization and the working out of plans down to the minutest detail. The transfer of troops from ships to the shore is in itself an operation by no means devoid of difficulty and one which requires rehearsal. Here officers and men of the Royal Navy are seen carrying out an exercise of the kind which in April, 1915, they were called upon to practise against a position held by some of the most resolute defensive fighters in the world.

but as it was now nearly half-past five and the light was fading, the Commander-in-Chief signalled a "General Recall," and the day's operations came to a close. Only 139 12-inch shells had been fired by the Fleet.

The results of this inconclusive bombardment seemed to show, first, that it was necessary for ships to anchor before accurate shooting could be made, secondly, that direct fire was better than indirect fire, and, thirdly, that it was not sufficient to hit the forts with the naval shells—actual hits must be made on the guns or their mountings. This last fact was important.

The Outer Forts Destroyed

The next day the weather broke and no operations were possible for five days. On the 25th the bombardment was resumed in the light of the experience gained. The *Agamemnon* fired at Fort Helles, the *Queen Elizabeth* at Sedd-el-Bahr and later at Fort Helles, the *Irresistible* at Orkanie and the *Gaulois*

at Kum Kale. All these ships and others reciprocally observed and checked each other's fire. The forts replied, but without much success.

The effect of the bombardment was remarkable. It proved conclusively the great accuracy of naval fire, provided good observation could be obtained. After eighteen rounds the *Queen Elizabeth* hit directly and disabled both the modern guns in Fort Helles. With an expenditure of thirty-five rounds the *Irresistible* destroyed both the modern guns in Orkanie, one early and one late in the day. Thus all four long-range guns defending the mouth of the Straits were individually disabled or destroyed for a very moderate expenditure of ammunition.

In the afternoon the ships advanced to within close range of the forts and brought a heavy fire to bear on all of them. All the forts were silenced. The older forts with their short-range armament were considered by the Turks mere shell-traps and their



Photo Copyright

H.M.S. AGAMEMNON TAKING AMMUNITION ABOARD

A work-a-day scene on board *Agamemnon* taken during the early stages of the Gallipoli campaign. A lighter has come alongside and men are shown hauling on the tackle employed in transferring a cordite from the lighter to the battleship. The cases shown on deck, each of which contains a single charge of cordite for the heavy guns of the battleship, are of the type used in the magazine to guard against accidental ignition.



Photo Copyright

NAVAL LANDING PARTY COMING ASHORE AT KUM KALE

A remarkable photograph showing demolition parties and marines about to land at Kum Kale to complete the work of destruction so well carried out by the guns of the fleet. Parties were landed at both Kum Kale and Sedd-el-Bahr, the marines being employed as covering parties whilst demolition of guns and works was in progress.

garrisons were withdrawn from them. After the Armistice the Turks stated that the batteries and ammunition dumps were all destroyed, but none of the magazines touched. The forts were evacuated because the short-range fire of the Fleet had destroyed them entirely. The loss of life on both sides was small. Practically no damage was done to the Fleet, although the *Agamemnon* was hit six or seven times. In all only three men were killed and seven wounded.

Landing of Marines

It will be seen that this was a very important and satisfactory day. Only thirty-one 15-inch shells had been fired in all, besides eighty-one British 12-inch and fifty from the corresponding French guns. The bombardment clearly proved the power of the ships anchored at about

12,000 yards, if good observation at right angles to the range was available, to destroy the Turkish guns without undue expenditure of ammunition. It was now possible to sweep the approaches and the entrance to the Straits, which was done on the evenings of the 25th and the 26th. Three battleships entered the Straits and completed the ruin of the outer forts from inside.

A still more remarkable and, as we thought at the time, more hopeful development followed. On the 26th and following days, covered by the guns of the Fleet, demolition parties of 50 to 100 sailors and marines were landed, who blew to pieces with gun-cotton all the guns in Sedd-el-Bahr, as well as in the two forts on the Asiatic side. They were not seriously opposed by the Turks. In all forty-eight guns were destroyed or found in a disabled condition by the landing



Photo Central News

ASHORE AT GALLIPOLI

A marine sentry is seen here on duty guarding one of the approaches to the spot where a demolition party is at work. Although at this time the Turkish land forces were not in great strength members of the covering and demolition parties were in constant danger from snipers who according to accounts given at the time were both active and numerous

parties, only nine men being killed and wounded¹

Successful Conclusion of the First Phase

Thus by March 2 the whole of the outer defences of the Dardanelles were destroyed, including nineteen primary guns, of which four were modern. These constituted approximately in number and in quality one-fifth of the whole of the gun defences of the Straits. The Fleet was now able to sweep and enter the Straits for a distance of six miles up to the limit of the Kephez minefield.

¹ Of the ten heavy guns in Sedd el-Bahr only three had been destroyed by the bombardment. Of the ten guns in Kum Kale seven were apparently found undamaged. Fort Orkane was also entered and both guns were found disabled. Six modern howitzers on the cliff to the east of Sedd-el-Bahr and a number of smaller guns were also destroyed.

The first phase of the Dardanelles operations was thus completed.

The greatest satisfaction was expressed at the Admiralty, and I found myself in these days surrounded by smiling faces. Lord Kitchener told me that his officers who were in contact with the Admiralty reported a spirit of strong confidence. If the Dardanelles Commissioners could only have taken the expert evidence on the feasibility of ships attacking forts in the first week of March, 1915, instead of in the spring of 1917, they would have been impressed by the robust character of naval opinion on these questions. They would also have been struck by the number of persons who were in favour of the Dardanelles operations and claimed to have contributed to their initiation. In short, their task would

have resembled the labours of the Royal Commission which inquired into the origin of the Tanks.

Each day at the meetings of the Admiralty War Group I invited Sir Henry Jackson to give his appreciation of the telegrams from the Fleet. These appreciations were up to this point highly encouraging. I telegraphed to Admiral Carden at the end of February asking how many fine days he estimated he would require to get through. He replied on March 2 "Fourteen." It really looked as if we had found a way in which the Navy could help the allied cause in a new and most important direction. However, I observe that I informed the War Council on February 26 that "the Admiralty could not guarantee success and that the main

difficulty would be encountered at the Narrows. All that could be said was that the reduction of the outer forts gave a good augury for success." I also pointed out repeatedly that a purely naval operation would not in itself make the Straits free for unarmoured merchant ships.

The Inner and Intermediate Defences of the Dardanelles were now exposed to the attack of the Fleet. These defences consisted of ten forts and batteries of varying size and importance equally disposed on the European and Asiatic shores, of the minefields closing the Straits in successive lines, and of the mobile batteries and howitzers which protected both the forts and the minefields. To this problem the Fleet now addressed itself.

* * *

Increasing Prospects of Military Aid

From February 24 onwards I could contemplate that Lord Kitchen-er would in certain circumstances be willing to use an army not merely to exploit a victory of the Fleet, but actually if need be to contribute to it on a large scale. All else was uncertain. What he would do, when and how he would do it, remained impenetrable.

The increasing possibilities of extensive military action made me anxious about the conditions which prevailed in the War Office. I knew that practically no military staff work was being done. The various contingencies possible were not being studied in detail. Numbers, dates, supplies and the organization appropriate to the various forms of action which might be required, were in the most vague condition, in so far as they were not carried in the comprehensive mind of the Secretary of State for War himself. He was in constant communication with General Birdwood at the Dardanelles.



BRITISH MARINES IN A LOOK-OUT POST

Photo Central No. 12

As will be seen from this photograph there was abundance of cover among the ruined buildings left standing near the principal landing places. The marines in this photograph are making use of an ancient loop-holed wall. Such structures as that shown here greatly strengthened were used by the Turks in their defence of the shores when a few weeks later the men of the immortal 29th Division made their historic landing upon the Peninsula.

But he did not allow the General Staff nor the Quartermaster-General to meddle in the business at all at this stage, nor give them any mixing of the grave decisions which in certain circumstances he might wish to take, and which were evidently forming in his mind. Seeing all this I became increasingly apprehensive in the first week of March lest a military breakdown should occur.

I was determined not to be involved in responsibility for action far more momentous than any which the Admiralty was taking, but over which I had

absolutely no control. I therefore early in March asked the Prime Minister to arrange an interview between me and Lord Kitchener in his presence. I then asked Lord Kitchener formally and pointedly whether he assumed responsibility for any military operations that might arise, and in particular for the measure of the forces required to achieve success. He replied at once that he certainly did so, and the Admiralty thereupon transferred on March 12 the Royal Naval Division to his command.

On March 10 the 29th Division was ordered to Lemnos, and on March 16 the earliest of its transports sailed. The War Office, however, did not embark it in the ships in any order or organization to fight on arrival at its destination.

* * * *

Consequences of the Attack on the Dardanelles

The success of the naval attack upon the outer forts of the Dardanelles and the first penetration of the Straits produced reactions of high consequence throughout Europe, and their repercussion was apparent all over the world. "The Turkish Headquarters at the end of February," writes General Luman von Sanders, then the head of the German Military Mission, "expected the success of a breakthrough by the hostile Fleet. Arrangements were made for the Sultan, the Court and Treasury to take refuge in the interior of Asia Minor."¹ Far away on the Chicago Stock Exchange wheat prices fell with suddenness.

In Europe, Russia asked for a public declaration about Constantinople. At the outset of the war the attitude of Russia had been perfectly correct. She had joined with

¹ *Five Years in Turkey* by Luman von Sanders p. 72



Photo Elliott & Fry

ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET SIR HENRY JACKSON

Entering the Navy in 1868 Jackson in the course of a long and distinguished career in the service held many appointments of importance. He was Chief of the War Staff 1912-14 and during the Great War was for a time in 1915-16 First Sea Lord. Admiral Jackson was an expert on technical subjects and was the first man to introduce Hertzian waves for wireless telegraph in battleships.

England and France in assuring Turkey that the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire would be respected at the peace. But once Turkey, rejecting this fair offer, had taken sides against her, the Russian attitude changed. "The Turkish aggression," writes Monsieur Paleologue, the French Ambassador in Petrograd, November 9, 1914, "has resounded to the depths of the Russian conscience. All the romantic Utopias of Slavism have suddenly awakened." The supreme need of encouraging Russia in the midst of her disasters and defeats led Sir Edward Grey, as early as November 14, 1914, to instruct Sir George Buchanan to inform M. Sazonoff that the British Government recognized that "the question of the Straits and of Constantinople should be settled in conformity with Russian desires."

At the time this had remained a complete secret. But now in 1915 that there seemed to be a prospect of Constantinople falling into the hands of the Allies, Russian opinion required public reassurance. Such an announcement was bound to cause unfavourable reactions in Greece, Bulgaria and Roumania. Could we, on the other hand, afford to quarrel with or even dishearten Russia at the moment when she was reeling under the German cannonade, but was nevertheless contending manfully and was all the time vital to our hopes of general victory?

¹ *La Russie des Tsars* Maurice Paleologue, Vol I p 187



Photo Central News

GENERAL LIMAN VON SANDERS

Commander in Chief of the Turkish forces at Gallipoli in 1915. Liman von Sanders was born in Prussia in 1855. He entered the German Army in 1874 and in 1914 was sent to Constantinople. Throughout the greater part of the war he directed the operations of the Turkish armies in the Middle East, and in 1918 was in command of the Turkish army opposing Allenby's forces in Palestine and Syria.

Conservative Leaders invited to Conference

So important was the decision judged, that at the beginning of March the Prime Minister invited the leaders of the Conservative Party, Lord Lansdowne and Mr Bonar Law, to attend our Council on the subject. I was glad of this development and strongly advised it. I had long wanted to see a National Coalition formed. I viewed with great disquiet the spectacle of this powerful Conservative Party—almost all-powerful it had become since Liberal politics were shattered for the

time by the outbreak of the struggle—brooding morosely outside, with excellent information from the Services and complete detachment from all responsibility for the terrible business which had to go forward from day to day. We needed their aid. The Empire needed their aid. We wanted all their able men in positions of high and active authority. I had frequently talked to Mr. Asquith in this sense in the early months of the war, and I now pointed out that this moment, when some fruition and promise of success had come to us in the East, was of all others the time when the necessary fusion and coalition could be effected on terms honourable to both great parties. The Prime Minister was far from being unconscious of this aspect, or of the political instability which the situation would present should the general state of the war take a turn for the worse, as seemed very likely.

I hoped that this first meeting with the official chiefs of the Opposition—Mr. Balfour being already in our councils—might lead to rapid developments in the direction of our national unity and cohesion. The two Conservative leaders, however, showed plainly by their manner that they did not care to become responsible for a fraction only of the policy of the State and were chary of committing themselves in regard to a single incident. This was natural, but the results were unfortunate. The Council did not march satisfactorily, although a united decision was reached. And on the whole, as the result, a chilling impression of domestic politics was, I think, sustained by the Prime Minister.

In the early days of March both Great Britain and France apprised the Russian Government that they would agree to the annexation of Constantinople by Russia as a part of a victorious peace, and this momentous fact was accordingly made public on the 12th.

Effects of the Dardanelles upon the Balkan States

In the Balkans the effect of the naval operations was electrical. The attitude of Bulgaria changed with lightning swiftness. Within a fortnight our Intelligence Reports showed that the Turks

were being forced to move back to Adrianople and develop their front against Bulgaria. General Paget, the head of a special Mission then at Sofia, telegraphed to Lord Kitchener on March 17 that after an audience with the King he was convinced that "the operations in the Dardanelles have made a deep impression, that all possibility of Bulgaria attacking any Balkan State that might side with the Entente is now over, and there is some reason to think that shortly the Bulgarian Army will move against Turkey to co-operate in the Dardanelles operations."

The attitude of Roumania also became one of extreme and friendly vigilance. Russia, although she had not previously been able to spare more than 1,000 Cossacks for action in the Balkans, now offered the fullest naval co-operation and began to concentrate an army corps under General Istomine at Batoum to participate in what was believed to be the impending fall of Constantinople.

Hopes of Italian Intervention

On March 2 our Minister at Bucharest telegraphed that the Roumanian Prime Minister had said that his conviction that Italy "would move soon" had become stronger. "My Russian colleague has twice seen the Italian Minister and while the latter had often before spoken to him about Italy joining us in the war, his language on the last two occasions was more precise than ever before and was indeed almost pressing. He spoke of acquisitions on the Adriatic coast, and a share in the eventual partition of Turkey. Italy would have in a month's time an army of 1,800,000 men ready to move." Other similar indications flowed in. On March 5 I intimated to Sir Edward Grey "The attitude of Italy is remarkable. If she can be induced to join with us, the Austrian Fleet would be powerless and the Mediterranean as safe as an English lake. Surely some effort should be made to encourage Italy to come forward. From leaving an alliance to declaring war is only a step." The Foreign Secretary replied in writing, "I will neglect no opportunity."

March 1 The Second Greek Offer

Most important of all were the effects upon Greece. We have seen how on February 11 M. Venizelos, in spite of his friendship for the Allies and his deep desire to join them, had refused to be drawn into the war by the futile offer of a British and French division. But the attack on the Dardanelles produced an immediate change. On March 1 the British Minister in Athens telegraphed that M. Venizelos had put forward a proposal that a Greek army corps of three divisions should be sent to Gallipoli. Sir Edward Grey promptly replied that H. M. Government would gladly accept this aid, and added that the Admiralty were very anxious that the Greeks should assist with ships as well as troops in the Dardanelles. The British Minister replied on March 2 "M. Venizelos hopes to be in a position to make us a definite offer to-morrow. He had already approached the King, who," added the Minister, "I learn from another source, is in favour of war."

On the 3rd the British Military Attaché at Athens telegraphed that "The view of the Greek General Staff was universally that the naval attack should be assisted by land operations. Their plan was to disembark four or five Greek divisions at the Southern extremity of the Peninsula and to advance against the heights East of Maidos. Three successive defended positions would have to be carried, but Turks could not develop large forces owing to lack of space for deployment. If simultaneously an attack by a separate and sufficient force was made against lines of Bular, either by disembarking troops North of [the] lines or at head of Gulf of Xeros, the Turks would have to abandon the Maidos region or run risk of being cut off."

Thus at this moment we had within our reach or on the way out only the Australasian Army Corps and all the other troops in Egypt, the Royal Naval Division, and a French Division, we had also at least a Greek army corps of three divisions and possibly more, while a Russian army corps was assembling at Batoum. It would have been quite easy, in addition, to have sent the 29th

Division and one or two Territorial divisions from England. There was surely a reasonable prospect that with all these forces playing their respective parts in a general scheme, the Gallipoli Peninsula could even now have been seized and Constantinople taken before the end of April. Behind all lay Bulgaria and Roumania, determined not to be left out of the fall of Constantinople and the collapse of the Turkish Empire. One step more, one effort more—and Constantinople was in our hands and all the Balkan States committed to irrevocable hostility to the Central Powers.

One must pause, and with the tragic knowledge of after days dwell upon this astounding situation which had been produced swiftly, easily, surely, by a comparatively small naval enterprise directed at a vital nerve-centre of the world.

Disastrous Character of Russian Action

But now a terrible fatality intervened. Russia—failing, reeling backward under the German hammer, with her munitions running short, cut off from her allies—Russia was the Power which ruptured irremediably this brilliant and decisive combination. On March 3 the Russian Foreign Minister informed our Ambassador that—

"The Russian Government could not consent to Greece participating in operations in the Dardanelles, as it would be sure to lead to complications."

"The Emperor," M. Sazonoff added, "had in an audience with him yesterday, declared he could not in any circumstances consent to Greek co-operation in the Dardanelles." This was a hard saying. Was there no finger to write upon the wall, was there no ancestral spirit to conjure up before this unfortunate Prince, the downfall of his House, the ruin of his people—the bloody cellar of Ekaterinburg?

King Constantine Rebuffed

In Athens the Russian Minister, under orders from his Government, was active to discourage and resist the Greek intervention. In particular, the King of Greece was made aware that in no circumstances would he be allowed to

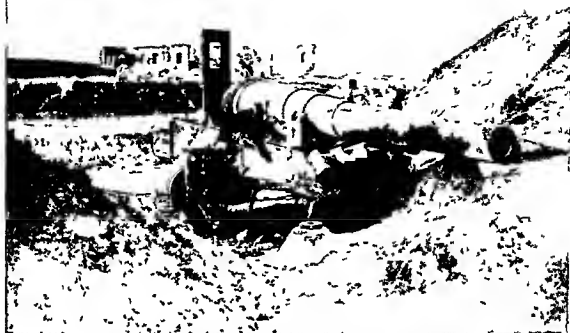


Photo Imperial War Museum

AFTER THE BOMBARDMENT AT CAPE HELLES

A 9.4 inch gun employed by the Turks at Cape Helles dismounted and put out of action by a direct hit from one of the *Queen Elizabeth's* guns. In the background are all that remained of the Turkish barracks.

enter Constantinople with his troops. Other suggestions were made, that perhaps one Greek division might be allowed to participate, "this having the advantage that the King could not take the field in person." Can one wonder that, with his German consort and German leanings, with every appeal on the one hand and this violent rebuff upon the other, King Constantine was thrown back, and relapsed into his previous attitude of hostile reserve?

Further advices from the French Foreign Office on March 4 stated —

"The Russian Government would not at any price accept the co-operation of Greece in Constantinople expedition. If the Greek Government offer co-operation in the Dardanelles expedition they should be told that co-operation of Greece in the war must be entire and she must give active support to Serbia."

Our Minister at Athens, the well-informed and vigilant Elliot, left us in no doubt of the Greek position.

"To insist on Greek support of Serbia," he telegraphed on the 6th, "except in the event of a Bulgarian attack, would be to wreck the prospect of Greek co-operation with us. The Prime Minister himself had been convinced by the arguments of the General Staff as to the strategical danger of such an operation."

The British Military Attaché telegraphed on the 6th —

"My Russian colleague told me to-day that he thought Russia would object to presence of King of Greece in Constantinople, and might make a stipulation that he did not come, a condition of acceptance of the present Greek offer. Any such restriction might lead to collapse of the whole proposal. I urged him to represent to Russian

CHAPTER XL

THE NEW RESOLVE

Increasing Difficulties—Fire of the *Queen Elizabeth*—Attacks of March 7 to 12—Sir Ian Hamilton appointed C-in-C—Written Instructions to Sir Ian Hamilton—Increasing Desire for Military Action—Lord Kitchener's Decision—The Opportunity for Reviving the Whole Position—A Chance to Bring off Britain Further Commitment—General Wish for Resolute Action—Admiralty Telegram to Vice-Admiral Carden—Admiral Carden's Illness—Admiral de Robeck—The Eve of March 18

WHILE the attention of so many States, great and small, was riveted upon the Dardanelles, and while so many profound and far-reaching reactions were occurring over the whole field of the war, the naval operations which had produced these great effects began to falter and to flag.

Increasing Difficulties

From March 3 onwards the progress of Admiral Carden's attack became continually slower. The weather was frequently unsuitable to long-range firing, our seaplanes in those early days were neither numerous nor very efficient, the co-ordination of the gunnery and the observation, though based on sound principles, was in practice primitive through lack of experience. The mobile howitzers which began to fire in larger numbers each day from both sides of the Straits harassed the bombarding ships and forced them to keep on the move. Landing parties sent ashore on March 4 met with much stiffer resistance, and failed to reach the forts. The attempts to sweep up the minefields encountered considerable and increasing Turkish fire from field guns well directed by searchlights. The mine-sweeping trawlers which had been provided for this service proved inadequate for so severe a task. The ordeal was very trying to their erstwhile civilian personnel who, though familiar with mines, had never previously encountered artillery fire.

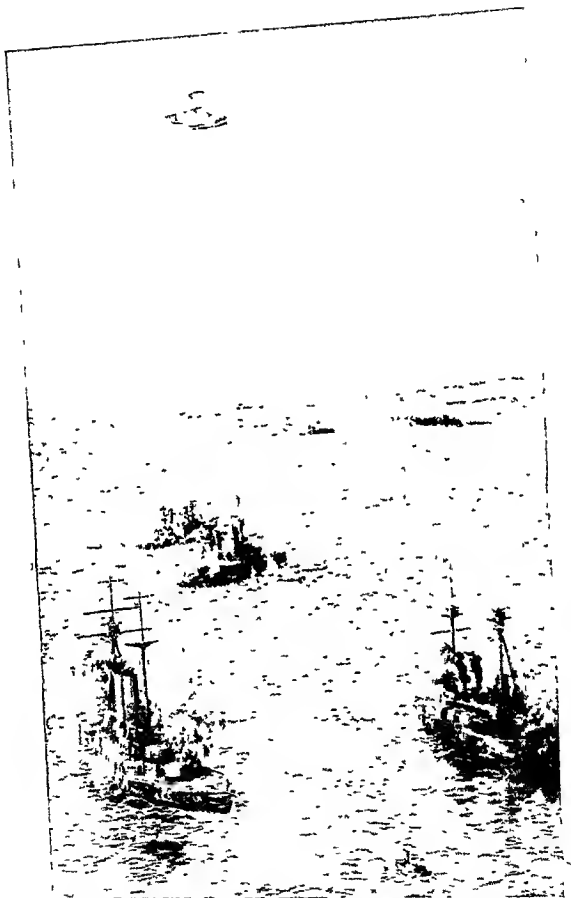
Three separate and successive bom-

bardments were made between March 2 and March 8 upon the Turkish forts constituting the inner defences of the Dardanelles.

First, on the 2nd and 3rd the *Canopus*, *Swiftsure*, *Cornwallis*, *Albion*, *Triumph* and *Prince George* at different times bombarded various forts, Fort Dardanos (8) receiving the main fire. The forts were silenced, but as the ships were kept moving sometimes in circles by the howitzer fire, no guns were hit. Altogether 121 12-inch shells were fired. No definite conclusions could be formed as to the effect of the fire, but the expenditure of ammunition was considered serious.

Fire of the *Queen Elizabeth*

The method was now changed. On March 5 the *Queen Elizabeth* began the indirect bombardment of the forts at the Narrows. She was stationed outside the Straits two miles from Gaba Tepe and fired across the peninsula. During the day thirty-three 15-inch shells were fired, twenty-eight at Fort 13 and five at Fort 17. Everything depended upon the arrangements for spotting the fall of the shots. This was provided so far as possible by three seaplanes and by three battle-ships (*Irresistible*, *Canopus* and *Cornwallis*) manoeuvring inside the Straits at right angles to the line of fire. Spotting for elevation by the ships was comparatively easy, but they were from their position unable to spot for direction. This depended upon the seaplanes, and for



After the painting by W. L. Wyllie R.A.

SPOTTING FOR THE FLEET DARDANELLES

This spirited picture showing a seaplane engaged in spotting and reporting results of the gunfire of the British Fleet at the Dardanelles was painted by the late W. L. Wyllie R.A., the distinguished painter of sea pictures. It is reproduced here by permission kindly granted by the artist's widow.

this all-important purpose our seaplane force was found inadequate. The first machine sent up crashed owing to the propeller bursting at 3,000 feet. The second machine was forced to descend after being hit six times by rifle bullets and the pilot wounded. The third machine gave one correction only.

The indirect bombardment was continued on March 6. By this time the Turks had brought up small guns and howitzers on the Gallipoli Peninsula which fired upon the *Queen Elizabeth* causing her to increase her range to 20,000 yards. The old Turkish battleship *Barbarossa* also opened fire upon her with her 11-inch guns from inside the Straits of Mardos. None of our ships was damaged, although all were hit on several occasions by the howitzers and field guns.

The results of the firing are now known to be as follows:—Fort 13 was hit eleven times and Fort 17 about seven times. The barracks in rear of both these forts were destroyed and one magazine was hit. No guns were damaged, but the firing, coming from an unprotected angle, had a disturbing effect on the Turkish guns' crews. Had aeroplane observation been possible, there is little doubt that great damage would have been done to the forts, and with a sufficient expenditure of ammunition every gun might have been smashed. The forts were quite unprotected from this direction, and each gun and mounting presented a maximum target.

The instruction contained in the original Admiralty orders about the sparing use of ammunition and the inadequate arrangements for observation from the air led to a premature discontinuance of this form of attack. This was a great pity. The long-range bombardment by the *Queen Elizabeth* was one of the prime features in the naval plan. Good supplies of ammunition were available for the 15-inch guns, but the Admiralty did not give permission to draw upon these till after March 18. The rule about economy therefore stood. It would have been possible in a few weeks to reinforce and improve the aerial spotting, and this

was, in fact, done. The principle underlying the use of the *Queen Elizabeth* against the forts, as embodied in the original Admiralty plan, was sound. The failure was due to the restriction on the expenditure of ammunition and to the inadequate aerial observation. Both these were subsequently remedied, but meanwhile the method had itself been precipitately condemned and was never resumed.

Attacks of March 7 to 12

The attack by indirect fire being assumed to have failed, direct attacks upon the forts at the Narrows were resumed on March 7 by the *Agamemnon* and *Lord Nelson* at ranges of from 12,000 to 13,000 yards. The French squadron also engaged Forts 7 and 8. The day was inconclusive. On the 8th the *Queen Elizabeth*, aided by the *Canopus*, *Cornwallis* and *Irresistible*, renewed the attack. The light was bad owing to rain squalls, and low clouds prevented seaplane observation. All the ships came under the usual howitzer fire, which however did them no serious harm. The forts were apparently silenced, but the Turks claim that they were reserving their ammunition for shorter ranges, and that they ceased firing to clear the guns of grit and debris thrown up by the exploded shells in their vicinity.

The operations continued till the 12th with fitful bombardments and tentative attempts to sweep the mine-fields. During these days I began to doubt whether there was sufficient determination behind the attack. In one of his telegrams, for instance, the Admiral reported that the mine-sweepers had been driven back by heavy fire which, he added, had caused no casualties. Considering what was happening on the Western Front and the desperate tasks and fearful losses which were accepted almost daily by the allied troops, I could not but feel disquieted by an observation of this kind. In further telegrams the Admiral explained the difficulties, and that he was reorganizing his mine-sweeping service with regular naval personnel. This reorganisation was not, however, complete

until a much later period in the operations. Meanwhile, although several further determined attempts were made, happily not attended by heavy losses, the minefields remained substantially intact.

It was clear that a much more vehement effort must be made.

* * *

Sir Ian Hamilton appointed C-in-C

The appointment of a military Commander-in-Chief for the forces assembling in the Eastern Mediterranean and his dispatch to the scene of operations was long overdue. By the end of the first week in March Lord Kitchener had virtually decided to select Sir Ian Hamilton, who was at that time in command of the Central Force at home. He did not, however, reveal his purpose to this officer until the morning of the 12th, when he sent for him and observed laconically "We are sending a military force to support the Fleet now at the Dardanelles, and you are to have command."

Waiting for this decision, delayed without reason day after day, while troops and events were swiftly moving forward, had been very trying to me and to Lord Fisher. The concentration of transports had been timed for the 18th, and a host of intricate and imperious questions connected with the feeding, watering and organization of large numbers of men and animals were impending at Mudros. The French Division was also on the sea and looking to us for directions and arrangements. All questions of the use of the troops were additional to these administrative problems. On the other hand, Lord Kitchener showed himself restive under repeated inquiries, and was prompt to resent anything that looked like pressure or forcing his hand. We were anxious to have whatever troops he would send on the spot as soon as possible, and great tact was necessary. It was not until the 11th that I was sure he had decided upon Sir Ian Hamilton. I immediately ordered a special train for the afternoon of the 12th in case it should be wanted.

¹ Sir Ian Hamilton *Gallipoli Diary*, p. 2

Written Instructions to Sir Ian Hamilton

The following were the salient points from Lord Kitchener's written instructions to Sir Ian Hamilton —

"(1) The Fleet have undertaken to force the passage of the Dardanelles. The employment of military forces on any large scale for land operations at this juncture is only contemplated in the event of the Fleet failing to get through after every effort has been exhausted.

"(2) Before any serious undertaking is carried out in the Gallipoli Peninsula, all the British military forces detailed for the expedition should be assembled so that their full weight can be thrown in.

"(3) Having entered on the project of forcing the Straits, there can be no idea of abandoning the scheme. It will require time, patience and methodical plans of co-operation between the naval and military commanders. The essential point is to avoid a check which will jeopardize our chances of strategical and political success.

"(4) This does not preclude the probability of minor operations being engaged upon to clear areas occupied by the Turks with guns annoying the Fleet or for demolition of forts already silenced by the Fleet. But such minor operations should be as much as possible restricted to the forces necessary to achieve the object in view, and should as far as practicable not entail permanent occupation of positions on the Gallipoli Peninsula."

Whatever military criticisms may be levelled at these instructions they represented fairly all that had been settled by the War Council up to that moment. With these instructions in his pocket, and accompanied by a small group of Staff officers appointed during the preceding day, and now meeting for the first time, Sir Ian Hamilton left Charing Cross for the Dardanelles on the evening of March 13. The thirty-knot light cruiser, *Phaeton*, awaited him under steam at Marseilles and carried him at full speed to the Dardanelles by the morning of the 17th.

* * *

Increasing Desire for Military Action

The increasing perplexities of the naval attack and the surprising ease with which the small parties of Marmes had been landed at the end of February upon the Peninsula made the immediate employment of troops very tempting both at the Admiralty and on the spot. It was difficult to judge the prospects of a military landing at this juncture. No one knew what troops the Turks had on the spot. Vice-Admiral Carden had stated in his telegram of February 23 that "the garrison of the Gallipoli Peninsula is about 40,000 men." This was also the working basis assumed by the War Office.

We now know that the force actually in the Peninsula at this date was under 20,000, scattered along the coast in small parties without supports or reserves. It seems probable that if the 29th Division had been on the spot in fighting order, it could have been landed, with whatever troops were

sent from Egypt, at this period without severe loss, and could have occupied very important and probably decisive positions. Thereafter the force landed would have had to sustain heavy and increasing Turkish attack. But there is no reason why they should not have held their ground, and they could have been continually reinforced from Egypt, and later from England, at a far greater rate than the enemy.

The possession of the vital observation-point of Achu Baba would have enabled the indirect naval fire to be directed with the utmost accuracy upon the forts at the Narrows. Heavy guns and howitzers, including our new 15-inch howitzers, could also have been landed and brought into action against them at effective ranges. In these circumstances the destruction of the forts within a reasonable time was certain, and the passage of the fleet into the Marmora must have followed. The use of troops on this scale would

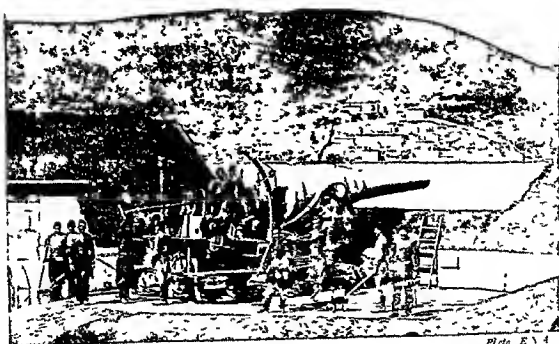


Photo E N A

WAITING FOR THE ALLIED FLEETS

One of the heavy Turkish guns manned and ready for action at the entrance to the Straits. The Turkish batteries defending the Dardanelles were fully equal to the task of inflicting serious damage upon the attacking ships, but their weakness lay, as is explained in the text, in a shortage of ammunition. Had the attack upon the forts been persisted in for even two more days the defenders would have been unable to make any reply.

*Photo Copyright*

THE BURNING VILLAGE OF KUM KALE

During the bombardment of March 4 1915 the village and fort at Kum Kale on the Asiatic shore of the Dardanelles were set on fire as a result of effective shooting by the naval guns. The Turks retired from this point and landing parties were sent ashore. The ancient city of Troy stood at a point directly beyond the darker smoke seen in the centre of the picture.

however have involved a new and serious decision. It meant nothing less than beginning a new campaign, and this would have had to be balanced against further perseverance in the purely naval attack which had not yet been pressed to any conclusion.

Lord Kitchener's Decision

I thought it right, without pronouncing an opinion myself, to ask Lord Kitchener for a formal statement of the War Office view. His reply was only what I expected.

First Lord

March 13, 1915

In answer to your question, unless it is found that our estimate of the Ottoman strength on the Gallipoli Peninsula is exaggerated and the position on the Kibd Bahr Plateau less strong than anticipated, no operations on a large scale should be attempted until the 29th Division has arrived and is ready to take part in what is likely to prove a difficult undertaking, in which severe fighting must be anticipated.

K

I do not criticize this decision. It

seemed the wisest open in the circumstances. The error lay earlier. Had the 29th Division been sent as originally decided from February 22 onwards, it would have reached the scene by the middle of March instead of three weeks later. Had it been packed on the transports in order of battle, it would have gone into action within a few days of its arrival. All the other troops allocated to this theatre were either conveyed to Lemnos from England or France or were waiting with transports alongside at Alexandria by March 17 or 18. From the 20th onwards they were all available (so far as sea transport was concerned) for an operation upon the Gallipoli Peninsula. The concentration of all troops allotted, including the French Division, was effected as promised by the Admiralty punctually to the date named, namely, March 17. The naval attack reached its culminating point on the 18th. No large Turkish reinforcements had yet reached the Peninsula. But without the 29th Division, the army could do nothing. This was the vital key division, the sole regular division, whose movements and arrival governed

everything. Therefore four-fifths of the force assigned to this theatre were concentrated punctually as arranged, and the indispensable remaining fifth, without which they could not act, was three weeks behind them. Thus they were all rendered useless.

* * * *

The Opportunity for Reviewing the Whole Position

By the middle of March we had therefore reached a turning point not only in the naval operations but in the whole enterprise. Hitherto no serious risks have been run, no losses have been sustained, and no important forces deeply engaged. The original Carden plan of gradual piecemeal reduction has been pursued. It has not failed, but it has lagged, and it is now so feebly pressed as almost to be at a standstill. Meanwhile, time is passing. Nearly a month has gone since we opened fire. What are the Turks doing? Clearly they must be reinforcing, fortifying, laying new mines, erecting new torpedo-tubes, mounting new guns under the organizing energy of their German instructors. What have the Germans themselves been doing? It would probably take about a month to send submarines from the Elbe to the Ægean. Have they been sent? Are they on their way? How far off are they? *They may be very near.* This was a rapidly growing anxiety. It was also a spur.

Surely now the moment has been reached to review the whole position and policy. Surely this is the very moment foreseen from the beginning when, "if matters did not go as we hoped, if the resistance of the forts proved too strong," we could, if we chose, break off the operation. Observe we could, in fact, do it in a moment. One gesture with the wand, and the whole armada assembled at the Dardanelles, or moving thither—battleships, cruisers, destroyers, trawlers, supply ships, transports—would melt and vanish away. Evening would close on a mighty Navy engaged in a world-arresting attack, and the sun might rise on empty seas and silent shores.

A Chance to Break off before Further Commitment

Further, was not this the moment to consider alternatives. The prolonged bombardment of the Dardanelles had assuredly drawn continually increasing Turkish forces to the Gallipoli Peninsula and the Asiatic shore. Guns, ammunition supplies of every kind, with which the Turks were so ill-provided, had been scraped and dragged from every other point, or were on the move. Moreover, the Russians had by a brilliant effort, largely restored the situation in the Caucasus. The British and French troops now on the sea might not be strong enough to land and storm the plateaus and ridges of Gallipoli. But no one could doubt their ability to take and hold Alexandretta—thus cutting from the Turkish Empire one vast portion, severing the communications of their army threatening Egypt, and intercepting the stream of sorely needed supplies and food-stuffs from the East. For such a descent, the Dardanelles operations were the best of all preliminaries—a sincere feat.

On me these considerations made no impression. I knew them all and I rejected them all. I was unwaveringly set upon the main enterprise. I believed that if we tried hard enough we could force the Dardanelles, and that if we succeeded in this a truly decisive victory would have been gained. But where were the admirals, generals and statesmen, who did not share these clear-cut conclusions, who had doubts—had always had doubts about the feasibility of the operation, about the margin of the Grand Fleet, about the utility of operations in the eastern theatre! Here surely was the time for them. Here surely was the time for Lord Fisher. He could say with perfect propriety and consistency, "We have given the Carden plan a good trial, I never liked it much. It has not come off, but it has been a very good demonstration, it has fooled the Turks, it has helped the Russians, it has cost us practically nothing—now let us break off altogether or turn to something else." Later on in April, when we were far more deeply committed, had suffered palpable loss and rebuff, and could not

withdraw without great injury to our war prestige, suggestions of this kind were indeed made. But now it was certainly an arguable policy to close the account, and in a naval sense it was the easiest thing in the world to do.

General Wish for Resolute Action

But what happened? So far from wishing to break off the operation, the First Sea Lord was never at any time so resolute in its support. He assented willingly and cordially to the new decision which was now taken to change the gradual tentative limited-liability advance into a hard, determined and necessarily hazardous attack. He approved the momentous Admiralty telegrams which I now drafted after full discussions in our War Group, and, of course, with continuous reference to the Prime Minister. He even offered to go out and hoist his flag and take command at the Dardanelles himself, saying that the responsibility was so great that it could only be borne by the highest authority. Subsequently, although it greatly complicated his position, Lord Fisher himself informed the Dardanelles Commissioners of this fact in a very frank and chivalrous manner.

So far as the other responsible authorities cited in these pages were concerned, no sign of disagreement was manifested. Sir Arthur Wilson, Sir Henry Jackson, Admiral Oliver, Com-



Photo Elliott & Fry

GENERAL SIR IAN HAMILTON

The appointment of Sir Ian Hamilton to direct the military operations on the Gallipoli Peninsula was justified if past service and experience were allowed to count for anything. He entered the Army in 1873 and took part in practically every campaign in which the country was involved during the forty years prior to the Great War. The task set at Gallipoli bristled with difficulties and if Hamilton failed it is open to question whether any other commander would have succeeded.

modore de Bartolome, all were united and agreed to press on and to press hard. The Ministers seemed equally decided. War Office and Foreign Office were eager and hopeful. The Prime Minister did not even think it necessary to summon a council and put the point to them. I have never concealed my opinion. I rejoiced to find so much agreement and force gathering behind the enterprise. My only complaint has been that

this high resolve was not carried through by all parties to a definite conclusion

What was the explanation of this unity and resolution? The vision of victory had lighted the mental scene. The immense significance of the Dardanelles and of the city which lay beyond had possessed all minds. The whole combination which had been dispersed by Russia on March 6 was still latent. The attitude of Italy, of Bulgaria, of Roumania, of Greece absorbed attention. Everyone's blood was up. There was a virile readiness to do and dare. All the will-power and cohesion necessary to mount and launch a great operation by sea and land were now forthcoming. But alas, a month too late!

Admiralty Telegram to Vice-Admiral Carden

On the Admiralty War Group all were agreed upon the following telegram to Admiral Carden —

March 11, 1915, 1 35 p m

101 Your original instructions laid stress on caution and deliberate methods, and we approve highly the skill and patience with which you have advanced hitherto without loss.

The results to be gained are, however, great enough to justify loss of ships and men if success cannot be obtained without. The turning of the corner at Chanak may decide the whole operation and produce consequences of a decisive character upon the war, and we suggest for your consideration that a point has now been reached when it is necessary, choosing favourable weather conditions, to overwhelm the forts at the Narrows at decisive range by the fire of the largest number of guns, great and small, that can be brought to bear upon them.

We do not wish to hurry you or urge you beyond your judgment, but we recognise clearly that at a certain period in your operations you will have to press hard for a decision, and we desire to know whether you consider that point has now been reached. We shall support you in well-concerned action for forcing a decision, even if regrettable losses are entailed.

And on the 15th —

109 We understand that it is your

intention to sweep a good clear passage through the minefields to enable the forts at the Narrows eventually to be attacked at close range, and to cover this operation whether against the forts or [against] the light and movable armament, by whatever fire is necessary from the Battle Fleet, and that this task will probably take several days. After this is completed we understand you intend to engage the forts at the Narrows at decisive range and put them effectually out of action. You will then proceed again at your convenience with the attack on the forts beyond, and any further sweeping operations which may be necessary. If this is your intention, we cordially approve it. We wish it to be pressed forward without hurry, but without loss of time.

The Admiral replied —

March 15, 1915, 9 15 a m

I fully appreciate the situation, and intend, as stated in my telegram of March 14, to vigorously attack fortresses at the Narrows, clearing minefields under cover of attack. Good visibility is essential, and I will take first favourable opportunity.

These two Admiralty telegrams, 101 and 109, were very serious messages to send to the Fleet. They had the intention among other things of making the Admiral feel that if he made a determined effort to force the passage and suffered very heavy losses, or the whole operation miscarried, the responsibility would rest with his superiors at home. He had only to think of his task and of the enemy in his front.

* * * *

Admiral Carden's Illness

Everything being settled for the attack, I took two days' holiday and went to Sir John French's Headquarters (where I was of course on the direct telephone) to await results. I had no sooner got there than I received a telegram from Vice-Admiral Carden to the Admiralty stating that he had been obliged to go on the sick list under decision of his Medical Officer. He recommended that the conduct of the operations should be entrusted to Vice-Admiral de Robeck who, he said, "was

well in touch with all the arrangements present and future, and has been of the greatest assistance in their preparation."

This was a disconcerting event. We had arrived at complete understanding with Vice-Admiral Carden. He was the responsible author of the gradual naval attack. He had declared himself in the fullest agreement with the adoption of a more vigorous method. He was deeply engaged in the business, and was bound to fight it through to a conclusion. Now on the eve of battle he had suddenly collapsed. We had to begin again with somebody else.

Admiral de Robeck

I had become acquainted with Admiral de Robeck during the previous three years. He bore an exceptionally high reputation in the service. He was a good sea officer and a fine disciplinarian. Before the war he had served during my tenure for two years on the East Coast as Admiral of Patrols. I had not always agreed with the schemes which he made in this capacity for dealing with war problems. One could not feel that his training and experience up to this period had led him to think deeply on the larger aspects of strategy and tactics. His character, personality, and zeal inspired confidence in all. The course of events pointed to him as the proper successor of Admiral Carden. He was, it is true, junior in substantive rank to Rear-Admiral Wemyss, now commanding the base at Mudros, but he had been Second-in-Command throughout the operations and had all their threads in his hands. Wemyss also was deeply engaged in the administrative crisis caused by the hourly arrival of the transports containing the Army. To exchange these officers merely on grounds of seniority seemed clearly wrong.

Wemyss himself, with high public spirit spontaneously telegraphed: "I am quite prepared to act under the orders of de Robeck if you should think it desirable to promote him. De Robeck and I are in perfect accord and can loyally co-operate whichever way you decide." The decision was virtually inevitable. Thus carefully did Destiny pick her footsteps at the Dardanelles.

The Eve of March 18

I deemed it indispensable to come to a complete understanding with Admiral de Robeck and to make sure once and for all that he was in full agreement with the Admiralty and ready to take up the operations from the point at which Vice-Admiral Carden had been forced to relinquish them. I therefore sent, after consulting Lord Fisher, the following telegram from Sir John French's Headquarters —

Admiralty to Vice-Admiral de Robeck

March 17, 1915

Personal and Secret from First Lord

In entrusting to you with great confidence the command of the Mediterranean Detached Fleet I presume you are in full accord with Admiralty telegram 101 and Admiralty telegram 109 and Vice-Admiral Carden's answers thereto, and that you consider, after separate and independent judgment, that the immediate operations proposed are wise and practicable. If not, do not hesitate to say so. If so, execute them without delay and without further reference at the first favourable opportunity. Report fully from day to day. Work in closest harmony with General Hamilton. Make any proposals you think fit for the subordinate commands. Wemyss is your second in command. All good fortune attend you.

Vice-Admiral de Robeck to Admiralty

March 17, 1915, 10.20 a.m.

First Lord of Admiralty. Secret and Personal.

228. From Vice-Admiral de Robeck. Thank you for your telegram. I am in full agreement with telegrams mentioned. Operations will proceed to-morrow, weather permitting. My view is that everything depends on our ability to clear the minefields for forcing the Narrows, and this necessitates silencing the forts during the process of sweeping. Generals Hamilton and d'Amade and Admiral Wemyss have been on board to-day, and interview entirely satisfactory.

And the next day —

March 18, 1915

Weather fine. Operations about to begin.

CHAPTER XLII

THE EIGHTEENTH OF MARCH

The Plan of Attack—The Fatal Omission—The Action Begins—The Forts Dominated—The *Bouvet* Mined and Sunk—*Invincible* and *Irresistible* Mined—The Attack Suspended—How I Spent March 18—General Resolve to Fight it Out—Admiral de Robeck's Telegram of March 23—Proposed Admiralty Order to Renew the Battle—The First Sea Lord's Refusal

ON the morning of March 18 the whole Allied Fleet advanced to the attack of the Narrows

The Plan of Attack

Admiral de Robeck's plan was to silence simultaneously the forts which guarded the Narrows and the batteries protecting the minefields. Ten battleships were assigned to the attack and six to their relief at four-hour intervals. The attack was to be opened at long range by the four modern ships. When the forts were partially subdued the four ships of the French squadron were to pass through the intervals of first line and engage the forts at 8,000 yards. As soon as the forts were dominated the mine-sweepers were to clear a 900-yards channel through the five lines of mines constituting the Kephez minefield. The sweeping was to be continued throughout the night, covered by two battleships, while the rest of the Fleet withdrew.

The next morning, if the channel had been cleared, the Fleet would advance through it into San Siglar Bay, and batter the forts at the Narrows at short and decisive range. The sweeping of the minefields at the Narrows would follow the destruction or effective disablement of these forts.

The actual distribution of duties was as follows—

Line A	<i>Queen Elizabeth</i>	} To fire at the forts at the Narrows at 14,000 yds
	<i>Agamemnon</i>	
	<i>Lord Nelson</i>	
	<i>Invincible</i>	
	<i>Triumph</i>	} To fire at the intermediate defences
	<i>Prince George</i>	

Line B	<i>Suffren</i>	} To fire later at the forts at the Narrows at 8,000 yards
	<i>Bouvet</i>	
	<i>Charlemagne</i>	
	<i>Gaulois</i>	
	<i>Cornwallis</i>	} To cover the mine-sweeping during the night
	<i>Canopus</i>	
	<i>Vengeance</i>	} Relief
	<i>Irresistible</i>	
	<i>Albion</i>	
	<i>Ocean</i>	
	<i>Swiftsure</i>	
	<i>Majestic</i>	

The Fatal Omission

The foundation of the whole plan was that the battleships would only fight and manœuvre in waters which had been thoroughly swept and were known to be clear of mines. On March 7 the bombarding area had been found free and was, in fact, free from mines. Sweeping operations had been carried out almost every night up to 8,000 yards from the Narrows and a few sweeps had been made along the Asiatic shore. Eren Keui Bay had not, however, been swept to any large extent.

An experiment carried out by the *Ark Royal* had led to the belief that a seaplane or aeroplane flying above a minefield could discern mines at 18-feet depth in the clear water below. The seaplanes frequently reported the presence of mines in the regular minefields, and their reports had come to be relied upon not only in the positive sense that mines were in a certain place, but in the much wider and more questionable negative sense that there were no mines where none were reported.

We now know that the experiment

of the *Ark Royal* was misleading. The seaplanes could not, in fact, locate the regular Turkish minefields, and what they saw and reported were only mines exceptionally near the surface or submerged net buoys. Every allowance must be made for the difficulty of the task and for the limited means available for discharging it. But the operation of sweeping the areas from which the ships were to bombard, which were fully under our control and not at all to be confused with the strongly guarded regular minefields, was the indispensable preliminary to any naval attack upon the forts. This, as we now know, was not achieved because the sweepers were inadequate both in numbers and efficiency, and this fact led directly to the losses in the attack of March 18, and indirectly to the abandonment of the whole naval enterprise.

For in the early and squally dawn of March 8, while the British night patrol of destroyers was withdrawing from the Straits, the little Turkish steamer *Nousrel* had laid a new line of twenty mines in Eren Keui Bay parallel to the shore and moored about 100 to 150 yards apart. These mines were intended to catch ships attempting to renew the bombardment from the positions in which they had worked on March 6 and 7. In fact, however, they played a recognizable part in the history of the Great War. Three of them were found and destroyed by the sweepers on March 16, but as no more were encountered it was not realized that they were part of a line of mines. There the rest lay during the ten days before the attack undetected and unsuspected. There they were now lying when in the brilliant



Photo Vandyk

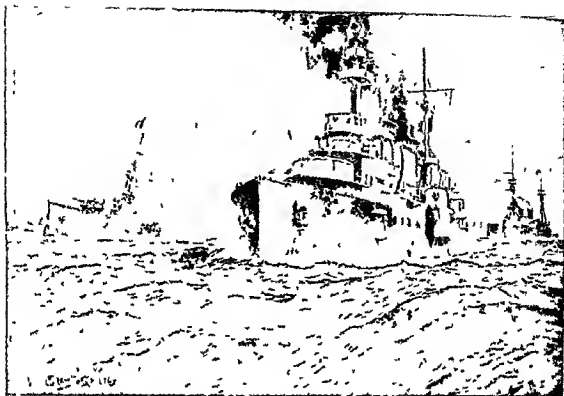
ADMIRAL SIR JOHN DE ROBECK

Appointed second in command to Sir Sackville Carden at the Dardanelles in 1915 Admiral de Robeck soon afterwards assumed command. He directed the naval operations against the Turks on March 18, 1915 and later was responsible for the naval side of the attack upon Gallipoli itself.

sunshine of March 18 the tremendous armada assembled under Admiral de Robeck's command advanced majestically to the execution of a momentous plan.

The Action Begins

At about half-past eleven the *Queen Elizabeth*, *Agamemnon*, *Lord Nelson* and *Inflexible* opened fire in succession on the forts at the Narrows at 14,400 yards range and a few minutes later the whole of Line A was in action. The ships were immediately subjected to a heavy fire from the movable bowitzers and field guns of the Intermediate Defences. All ships were struck several times, but their armour effectually protected them from



After a painting by H. Malchin

ONE FIFTY-FOUR P.M. MARCH 18, 1915

The first disaster to befall the Allied fleet during the bombardment of March 18, 1915, at the Dardanelles occurred at 1.54 p.m., when the French ship *Bouvet*, coming out of the Straits, struck a mine in Eren Keui Bay. The picture shown above, after the painting of W. Malchin shows the *Bouvet*, on the left, a few seconds after impact with the mine. In the centre is the French ship *Gaulois*, whilst the British *Agamemnon* is seen following behind.

damage. The forts also began to fire, but the range was too great for them.

At 11.50 a big explosion took place in Fort 20 on which the *Queen Elizabeth* was firing, and both the *Agamemnon* and *Lord Nelson* were seen to be hitting Forts 13 and 17 repeatedly. A few minutes after midday the French Squadron advanced through the bombarding line and, gallantly led by Admiral Guepratte, began to engage the forts at closer range. All the forts replied vigorously and the firing on both sides became tremendous, the whole of Lines A and B firing simultaneously both at the forts and at the lighter batteries.

The spectacle at this period is described as one of terrible magnificence. The mighty ships wheeling, manœuvring and firing their guns, great and small, amid fountains of water, the forts in clouds of dust and smoke pierced by enormous flashes, the roar of the cannonade reverberating back from the hills on each side of the Straits, both shores alive with the discharges of field

guns, the attendant destroyers, the picket-boats darting hither and thither on their perilous service—all displayed under shining skies and upon calm blue water, combined to make an impression of inconceivable majesty and crisis.

The Forts Dominated

This period lasted for about an hour. A little before 1 o'clock a great explosion occurred in Fort 13. A quarter of an hour later Fort 8 ceased firing. The *Gaulois* and the *Charlemagne* were now hitting Forts 13 and 16 with regularity. At half-past one the fire of the forts slackened appreciably. By a quarter to two their fire had almost ceased. Their men had been driven, or withdrawn, from the guns, and the whole interior of the works was obstructed with debris.

The mine-sweepers were now ordered to advance. The French Squadron which had borne the brunt was recalled and the battleships of the relief moved forward to take their places. Scarcely any damage had been done to the British

ships, though the *Inflexible* had her fore-bridge wrecked and on fire, and several of the French ships had been a good deal knocked about. In the whole fleet, however, not one vessel had been injured in its fighting or motive power. The crews, protected by the strong steel armour, had suffered scarcely any loss. Not forty men in all had been killed or wounded. So far the plan seemed to be working well. The general impression was that the forts were dominated and that, had there been no minefield, the ships could have steamed through the Straits, keeping the forts pinned down by their fire with little loss. It is certain at any rate, that we had the measure of the forts. But now the first of the disasters occurred.

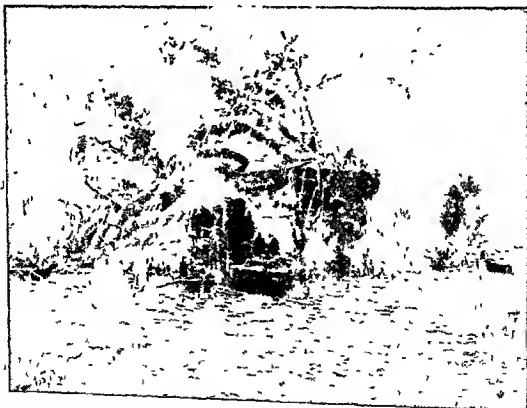
The *Bouvet* Mined and Sunk

At 1.54, as the *Bouvet* was coming out of the Straits, following her flagship, the *Suffren*, she struck one of the mines in Eren Kew Bay. The explosion fired her magazine and in two minutes she

vanished beneath the surface in a cloud of smoke and steam, only 66 men being saved. The cause of her destruction was attributed on the *Queen Elizabeth* to a heavy shell, and the operations continued without a pause.¹

At 2 o'clock the forts were completely silent and only the *Queen Elizabeth* and the *Lord Nelson* continued to fire at them. The mine-sweepers were now ordered to enter the Straits, and the relieving line of "B" battleships at the same time advanced to engage the forts at closer range. All the forts resumed a rapid but ineffective fire, and the *Queen Elizabeth* replied with salvos. This second phase also continued for over an hour, the forts firing spasmodically and without injuring the fleet. There is no doubt that at this time the Turkish fire control and communications were deranged. Meanwhile, the

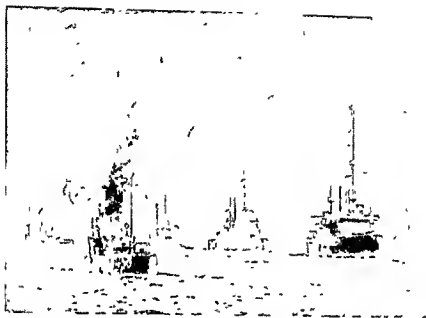
¹ There is still doubt whether the *Bouvet* struck a mine, or whether a shell exploded her magazine. She was over the new minefield and the Turks think she was destroyed by it.



THE LAST OF THE *BOUVET*

Drawing E.N.A.

As explained in the text the disaster to the *Bouvet* was attributed by observers on the *Queen Elizabeth* to a heavy shell. The Turks believe that she struck a mine. Whatever the cause the explosion fired her magazine and in two minutes she vanished below the surface in a cloud of smoke and steam, only sixty six men being saved.



THE NAVAL ATTACK AT THE

Undeterred by the loss of the *Bouvet* the fleet continued to pound away at the Turkish forts explosives descending upon the land defences. This great ship was capable of firing her salvoes silenced the batteries guarding the minefields were put to flight and

mine-sweepers were advancing slowly against the current towards the Kephez minefield. On their way they exploded three and fished up three more of the newly laid mines in Eren Kem Bay. It was of this moment in the action that Admiral de Robeck subsequently reported, "At 4 p.m. the forts of the Narrows were practically silenced, the batteries guarding the minefields were put to flight, and the situation appeared to be most favourable for clearing the minefields."

Inflexible and Irresistible Mined

At 4.11 the *Inflexible*, which all day had been lying in or close to the unknown minefield, reported she had struck a mine. She took a serious list and her condition was evidently one of danger. Three minutes later it was seen that the *Irresistible* had also listed and was apparently unable to move. At 4.50 Admiral de Robeck learned for certain that this ship also had struck a mine.

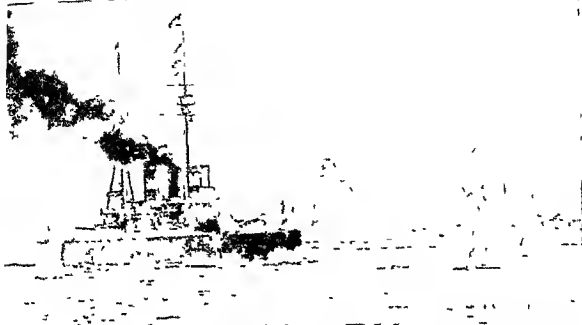
The appearance of these mines in water which it had been confidently believed was entirely free from them, and in which the fleet had been manoeuvring all day, was profoundly disconcerting.

It was not thought possible at this time that a line of moored mines could have been laid in our own waters, nor was this known till the end of the war. What then was the mysterious and terrific agency which had struck these deadly blows? Was it torpedoes fired from some concealed or submerged station on the shore? Was it a great shoal of floating mines thrown overboard by the Turks above the Narrows and only now carried by the current among the fleet? Several such mines were seen drifting down during the afternoon, and had been grappled with by the hardy packet-boats. Moreover, just before the beginning of the action four Turkish steamers had been seen waiting in the Narrows, presumably to discharge cargoes of mines at the proper moment.¹ This was therefore the more probable explanation. But anyhow, it was obvious that the area in which the ships were working was not free from mines, or that some other even more alarming cause was active.

The Attack Suspended

On this, Admiral de Robeck deter-

¹ There was in fact one ship for that purpose.



DARDANELLES CONTINUES

Drawing by Norman Wilkinson

The *Queen Elizabeth* hurled salvo after salvo each of which meant some seven tons of metal and at the rate of about two each minute. By 4 p.m. the forts of the Narrows were practically the situation appeared to be most favourable for clearing the minefields.

muned to break off the action. No one can accuse this decision. It was impossible to continue the attack on the forts in the face of such losses and uncertainty. The two battleships which were to have covered the sweeping operations during the night could not be left in the Straits. Moreover, the Intermediate Forts (7 and 8) were not yet controlled. The sweeping operations could not therefore proceed and the whole operation must be interrupted. About 5 o'clock orders were given for a general retirement, and all attention was concentrated on the wounded ships and the saving of their crews. While going to the aid of the *Irresistible* the *Ocean* ran into the same minefield and was also stricken. The rest of the story is soon told. The *Inflexible* reached Tenedos Island safely and was anchored in shallow water. The crews of the *Irresistible* and *Ocean* were taken off in destroyers which were most skilfully and courageously handled, and both these derelict battleships foundered during the night in the depths of the Straits.

Thus ended the action of March 18. For all the tremendous firing and

prodigious aspect of the battle, the bloodshed on both sides was incredibly small. The Turkish lost less than 150 men in their batteries and forts, and in the whole British Fleet only 61 men were killed and wounded. The French, however, had to mourn the crew of the *Bouvet*, of whom nearly 600 perished. Of the ships, the *Inflexible* was put out of action for six weeks, the *Gaulois* had been severely injured by gunfire, and three of the old battleships had been sunk. We shall see later on what was the condition of the enemy and his defences.

* * * *

How I Spent March 18

I passed the day of the 18th in the French trenches among the sand-dunes of the Belgian coast. Here the snarling lines which stretched from Switzerland touched the sea, and the barbed wire ran down the beach into salt water. Corpses entangled in the wire were covered with seaweed and washed by the tides as they mouldered. Others in groups of ten or twelve lay at the foot of the sandhills blasted in their charge, but with the sense and aspect

of attack still eloquent in their attitude and order. These dead had lain there for months, and the sand gradually gained upon them, softening their outlines. It was as if Nature was gathering them to herself. The lines were very close together, and in places only a few yards apart. A vigilant silence reigned, broken by occasional guns. The defences in the sand were complicated and novel.

They presented features I had not seen on any other part of the front. It was fine weather, and I was thankful to keep my mind from dwelling on the events that I knew were taking place on the other sea flank of the hostile line. I returned to England during the night of the 18th in order to receive the account of the action.

It reached me in the morning, and at the first glance one could see that no good result had been achieved.

A later message added —

With the exception of ships lost and damaged, squadron is ready for immediate action, but the plan of attack must be reconsidered and means found to deal with floating mines.

General Resolve to Fight it Out

I regarded this news only as the results of the first day's fighting. It never occurred to me for a moment that we should not go on within the limits of what we had decided to risk, until we reached a decision one way or the other. I found Lord Fisher and Sir Arthur Wilson in the same mood. Both met me together that morning with expressions of firm determination to fight it out. The First Sea Lord immediately ordered two battleships, the *London* and *Prince of Wales*, to reinforce Admiral de Robeck's fleet and to replace casualties, in addition to the *Queen* and *Implacable* which were already on their

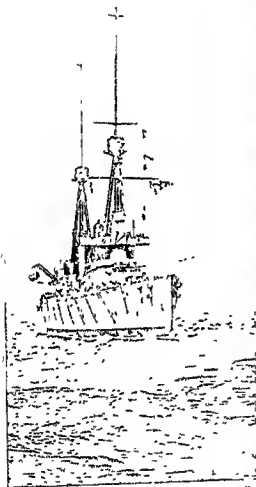


Photo Coll.

HMS INFLEXIBLE

Launched in 1908 this battle cruiser belonged to the *Invincible* class. She had a speed of twenty-five knots and mounted eight 12 inch and sixteen 4 inch guns. She was present at the battle of the Falkland Islands (see pp. 413 and 414), and although damaged by a mine at the Dardanelles she reached Texel Island without further mishap and survived to fight at Jutland.

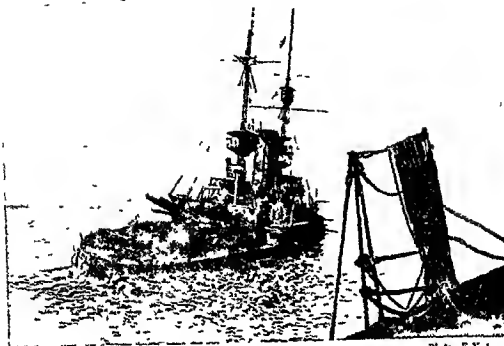


Photo E.V.A.

THE WRECK OF THE IRRESISTIBLE

The third disaster to the Allied fleet on March 18, concerned the British ship *Irresistible*. Three minutes after the *Invincible* struck a mine, at 4 14 p m the *Irresistible* met with a like disaster. Less fortunate than *Invincible* she listed heavily, and it became necessary to rescue her crew. She is seen here, derelict, some hours before foundering in the waters of the Straits.

way The French Minister of Marine telegraphed that he was sending the *Henri IV* to replace the *Bouvet*. We all repaired to the War Council which met at 11 o'clock. The War Council was also quite steady and determined, and after hearing our news authorized "The First Lord of the Admiralty to inform Vice-Admiral de Robeck that he could continue the naval operations against the Dardanelles if he thought fit."

On this we sent a telegram of encouragement to Admiral de Robeck, apprising him of the ships coming to reinforce him. We added —

It appears important not to let the forts be repaired, or to encourage enemy by an apparent suspension of the operations. Ample supplies of 15-inch ammunition are available for indirect fire of *Queen Elizabeth* across the peninsula.

On the 20th Admiral de Robeck telegraphed to the Admiralty the details of the reorganization of the mine-sweeping which he was putting into effect. He hoped, he said, to be in a position to renew operations in three or four days, the necessity of some

preliminary practice for the new mine-sweeper crews and for the destroyers had imposed an inevitable delay. No ship was to enter the Dardanelles unless everything was in readiness for a sustained attack.

Later in the day he telegraphed that the fighting efficiency of his surviving ships was unimpaired, the damage being confined to funnels, superstructure, and decks.

Thus everything was so far steady and resolved. The First Sea Lord and the Admiralty War Group, the Prime Minister and the War Council, the French Ministry of Marine, Admiral de Robeck and the French Admiral on the spot—all had no other idea but to persevere in accordance with the solemn decisions which had been taken.

Admiral de Robeck's Telegram of March 23

But now suddenly on the 23rd came a telegram of a totally different character.

Vice-Admiral de Robeck to Admiralty

March 23, 1915 (Received 6 30 a m.)

818 At meeting to-day with Generals Hamilton and Birdwood the former

THE GREAT WAR

Admiralty to V.A. de Robeck
(42.) Not sent
Enr 818



In view of dangers of delay through
Submarine attack and of heavy
cost of Army operations and
possibility that it will fail or be
only partly effective in opening
the way Straits and that
the danger of mines will not
be relieved by it we consider
that you ought to prepare
operationally but essentially
with the plans contained in
your instructions and in
telegram 104 and that
you should make all preparations
to renew the attack of the
begin on 18th at the
first favorable opportunity.
You should dominate the
forts at the Narrows &
sweep the Mincifield and
then batter the forts at
close range taking your time

ADMIRALTY MINUTE TO VICE-ADMIRAL DE ROBECK (1)
Facsimile of the First Lord's Minute prepared for submission to
the Admiralty War Group on March 23 1915

Proposed Admiralty Order to
Renew the Battle

I read this telegram with consterna-
tion. I feared the perils of the long
delay, I feared still more the immense
and incalculable extension of the enter-
prise involved in making a military
attack on a large scale. The mere
process of landing an army after giving
the enemy at least three weeks' additional
notice seemed to me to be a most terrible
and formidable hazard. It appeared to
me at the time a far graver matter in
every way than the naval attack. More-

told me Army will
not be in a position
to undertake any
military operations
before 14th April. In
order to maintain our
communications when
the fleet penetrates
into the Sea of Mar-
mora it is necessary
to destroy all guns of
position guarding the
Straits. These are
numerous and only
small percentage can
be rendered useless by
gunfire. The landing
of demolishing party
on the 26th February
evidently surprised
enemy. From our
experience on the 4th
March it seems in
future destruction of
guns will have to be
carried out in face of
strenuous and well-
prepared opposition.
I do not think it a
practicable operation
to land a force ade-
quate to undertake
this service inside
Dardanelles. General
Hamilton concurs in
this opinion. If the
guns are not destroyed,
any success of fleet
may be nullified by
the Straits closing up
after the ships have
passed through, and as
loss of material will possibly be heavy,
ships may not be available to keep
Dardanelles open. The mine menace
will continue until the Sea of Marmora
is reached, being much greater than was
anticipated. It must be carefully and
thoroughly dealt with, both as regards
mines and floating mines. This will
take time to accomplish, but our
arrangements will be ready by the time
Army can act. It appears better to pre-
pare a decisive effort about the middle of
April rather than risk a great deal for what
may possibly be only a partial solution.

using your aeroplanes, &
 all your improved methods
 of guarding against mines
 the destruction of the forts
 at the Narrows may open
 the way for a further advance.
 The entry of the Fleet
 strong enough to beat
 Turkish Fleet would
 produce decisive results
 on the whole situation
 & such you need not be
 at this stage anxious
 about your ^{submarine} lines of
 communications. We know
 the forts are short of ammunition
 and supply of mines is
 limited. We do not think
 the time has yet come
 when we should
 have to give up the
 plan of forcing Dardanelles
 by a purely naval operation.
 Commander de Bartolome
 who starts to day will give
 you our views on points of detail
 Meanwhile all your preparations
 for resuming attack held up forward.

graphed "From experience gained on 18th I consider forts at the Narrows and the batteries guarding minefields can be dominated after a few days' engagement sufficient to enable mine-sweepers to clear Kephez minefields" But, if so, why not do this? It was what we had always meant to do. It was what we had decided to do. Why turn and change at this fateful hour and impose upon the army an ordeal of incalculable severity? An attack by the army if it failed would commit us irrevocably in a way no naval attack could have done. The risk was greater, the stakes were far higher. I had no doubt whatever what orders should be sent to Admiral de Robeck. I convened an immediate meeting of the Admiralty War Group, and placed the following before them —

ADMIRALTY MINUTE TO VICE-ADMIRAL DE ROBECK (2)

Facsimile of the second page of the First Lord's Minute. The Minute is included in the text on pp 621-622

Admiralty to Vice-Admiral de Robeck

over, what justification was there for abandoning the naval plan on which hitherto all our reasoning and conclusions had been based? The loss of life in the naval operations had been very small. In the whole operation only one ship of any importance (the *Inflexible*) had been damaged, and a month or six weeks in the dockyard at Malta would repair her thoroughly. As for the old battleships, they were doomed in any case to the scrap-heap.

Every ship lost was being replaced. Only on the 20th the Admiral had tele-

graphed "From experience gained on 18th I consider forts at the Narrows and the batteries guarding minefields can be dominated after a few days' engagement sufficient to enable mine-sweepers to clear Kephez minefields" But, if so, why not do this? It was what we had always meant to do. It was what we had decided to do. Why turn and change at this fateful hour and impose upon the army an ordeal of incalculable severity? An attack by the army if it failed would commit us irrevocably in a way no naval attack could have done. The risk was greater, the stakes were far higher. I had no doubt whatever what orders should be sent to Admiral de Robeck. I convened an immediate meeting of the Admiralty War Group, and placed the following before them —

Your 818

In view of the dangers of delay through submarine attack and of heavy cost of army operation, and possibility that it will fail or be only partly effective in opening the Straits, and that the dangers of mines will not be relieved by it, we consider that you ought to persevere methodically but resolutely with the plan contained in your instruction and in Admiralty telegram 109, and that you should make all preparations to renew the attack begun on 18th at the first favourable opportunity. You should dominate the forts at the

Narrows and sweep the minefield and then batter the forts at close range, taking your time, using your aeroplanes, and all your unproved methods of guarding against mines. The destruction of the forts at the Narrows may open the way for a further advance.

The entry into the Marmora of a fleet strong enough to beat Turkish Fleet would produce decisive results on the whole situation, and you need not be anxious about your subsequent line of communications. We know the forts are short of ammunition and supply of mines is limited. We do not think the time has yet come to give up the plan of forcing Dardanelles by a purely naval operation.

Commodore de Bartolomé, who starts to-day, will give you our views on points of detail. Meanwhile all your preparations for renewing attack should go forward.

The First Sea Lord's Refusal

But now immediately I encountered insuperable resistance. The Chief of the Staff was quite ready to order the renewal of the attack, but the First Sea Lord would not agree to the proposed telegram, nor did Sir Arthur Wilson nor Sir Henry Jackson who was present. Lord Fisher took the line that hitherto he had been willing to carry the enterprise forward because it was supported and recommended by the Commander on the spot. But now that Admiral de Robeck and Sir Ian Hamilton had decided on a joint operation, we were bound to accept their views. In fact, he was immensely relieved that the operation was at last assuming the form which in the earliest days he and all of us would have preferred. "What more could we want? The Army were going to do it. They ought to have done it all along."

But I, seeing how wofully and fearfully the situation was changed to our disadvantage by the delay and exposure, could not stand this. I saw a vista of terrible consequences behind this infirm

relaxation of purpose. For the first time since the war began, high words were used around the octagonal table. I pressed to the very utmost the duty and the need of renewing the naval attack. In this I was stoutly supported by Commodore de Bartolomé, but he was the youngest there, and I could make no headway. I closed the meeting without a decision. I took the draft of my telegram to the Prime Minister. I found him in hearty agreement with it, as was also Mr. Balfour, with whom I discussed it during the day.

Looking back, one can see now that this was the moment for the Prime Minister to intervene and make his view effective. As for me, what could I do? If by resigning I could have procured the decision, I would have done so without a moment's hesitation. It was clear, however, that this would only have made matters worse. Nothing that I could do could overcome the Admirals now they had definitely stuck their toes in. They had only to point to the losses of ships which had been incurred, and everyone would have sided with them. I was therefore compelled under extreme duress to abandon the intention of sending direct orders to Admiral de Robeck to renew the attack.

The First Sea Lord endeavoured to console me.

"It is the right thing," he wrote on the 24th, "without any doubt whatever to send Bartolomé,¹ and the sooner the better. You are very wrong to worry and excite yourself. Do try and remember that we are the lost ten tribes of Israel. We are sure to win!!! I know I am an optimist! Always have been!!! Thank God. Hustle Bartolomé! Send no more telegrams! Let it alone!"

Was I, in the light of all that followed, "wrong to worry and excite myself"? Await the sequel. It is right to feel the things that matter and to feel them while time remains.

¹ This project was not carried out.

CHAPTER XLIII

ADMIRAL DE ROBECK'S CHANGE OF PLAN

Sir Ian Hamilton's Problem—A Choice of Evils—Far-reaching Decisions—The Sacred Ships—A Discrepancy—General Liman von Sanders in Command—Lord Kitchener assumes the Burden—Complete Cessation of the Naval Offensive—The Turkish Army short of Ammunition—Evidence of Ammunition Shortage—Strength of the Turkish Resistance on Land

WHAT had happened at the Dardanelles? The army had arrived from the earliest moment permitted to them the Admiralty had carried all the troops to the point of concentration with punctuality. Sir Ian Hamilton had reached the Dardanelles on the eve of the naval attack on the Narrows, and had witnessed from the bridge of the *Phaeton* its closing scenes.

Sir Ian Hamilton's Problem

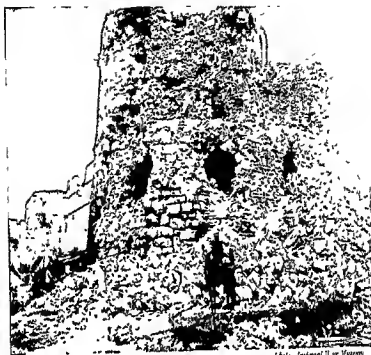
The impression of the sinking of the battleships, the spectacle of the crippled *Inflexible* listed and slowly steaming out of the Straits, the destroyers crowded with the rescued crews, was strong in his mind. These appearances aroused, in a nature chivalrous to a fault, an intense desire to come to the aid and rescue of the sister Service. It was in this mood that he addressed himself to the problem with which he was immediately confronted.

That problem was indeed grave and perplexing in an extreme degree. If the Navy asked for help, Sir Ian Hamilton was resolved to give it to the utmost of his power. If a landing on the tip of the Peninsula and the capture of the Kild Bahr Plateau would largely solve the naval difficulties, he would attempt it. But obviously then there was not a moment to lose. Every day, every hour, the Turkish defences and preparations would improve and their forces accumulate. A fortnight before, the disembarkation of 40,000 men on the Peninsula might have been effected without great difficulty. But now sharp

fighting must be expected. Still, General Birdwood, who had been watching events on the spot since the beginning of March, was eager to land then and there, and confident that the opposition would be overcome by a prompt attack.

But now, for the first time in these military operations, the General Staff were allowed to have their say. They unfolded to their Commander a massive and overwhelming case. The preparations for the landing under fire required an intense degree of organization. No preparations had been made. To carry out such an enterprise required, above all, a proportion at least of most highly-trained troops. None was available. The Australians, however brave and ardent, were, like the Royal Naval Division, only partly trained. The 29th Division had just sailed from England, and would not arrive before the first week in April.

But how would it then arrive? It had been embarked in twenty-two transports, without any idea of having to fight immediately. The ammunition was in one ship, the transport in another, the harness in a third, the machine guns at the bottom of the hold, and so on. Before these trained and excellent troops could go into action, they would have to be disembarked either by small boats in still water or upon a quay, and then completely re-sorted and organized in fighting trim. Mudros harbour (in Lemnos) offered neither facility. Moreover, although nearly 60,000 men were now available within striking distance of the Gallipoli



THE FORT AT SEDD EL-BAHR

Photo Imperial II or Vauxton

This photograph showing the Fort at Sedd el Bahr after the bombardment is taken from an angle different from that shown on p. 531. After the landing on April 23, 1915, this ruin was used by the French contingent who made themselves responsible for the eastern or straits shore of the Peninsula, as a dump for ammunition.

Peninsula, the supplies were scattered throughout the Mediterranean, the hospitals were not prepared, the staff had never come together.

A Choice of Evils

In the choice of evils which now alone was open to Sir Ian Hamilton, his staff pronounced that whatever were the risks of delay, they were less than those of a precipitate and unorganised assault. The General therefore determined to transfer his base and his army from Lemnos to Alexandria, leaving only sufficient troops at the Dardanelles for minor enterprises, and to organize from Egypt any large military operation which the Navy might require.

* * * *

Admiral de Robeck had come out of action on March 18 with every intention of resuming the attack at the earliest opportunity. But now occurred the sudden and extraordinary change, the repercussion of which we have witnessed

at the Admiralty. On the 22nd a Conference was held on board the *Queen Elizabeth*. There were present Admiral de Robeck, Admiral Wemyss, Sir Ian Hamilton, General Birdwood, General Braithwaite and Captain Pollen. Sir Ian Hamilton has recorded of this Conference —

"The moment we sat down de Robeck told us he was now quite clear he could not get through without the help of all my troops."

"Before ever we went aboard, Braithwaite, Birdwood and I had agreed that, whatever we landmen might think, we must leave the seamen to settle their own job, saying nothing for or against land operations or amphibious operations until the sailors themselves turned to us and said they had abandoned the idea of forcing the passage by naval operations alone."

"They have done so."
"So there was no discussion. At once we turned our faces to the land scheme."

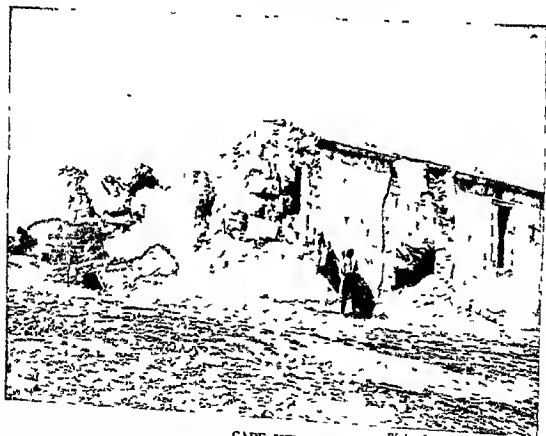
¹ *Gallipoli Diary*, p. 41

Far-reaching Decisions

It is clear that Admiral de Robeck came to his decision during the afternoon or night of the 21st. It was a far-reaching decision. It put aside altogether the policy of the Government and of the Admiralty, with which, up to this, the Admiral had declared himself in full accord. The plans which had emanated from the Fleet, on which both Admiral and Admiralty had been agreed, were cast to the winds. It withdrew the Fleet from the struggle, and laid the responsibilities of the Navy upon the Army. It committed the Army in the most unfavourable conditions to an enterprise of extreme hazard and of first magnitude. It was a decision entirely contrary to the whole spirit, and indeed to the explicit terms, of the latest messages. Admiral de Robeck had received from the Admiralty *after* the news of the action of March 18. It was outside the scope of the orders with which, on accepting the command,

the Admiral had stated he was in full agreement. It is true that the Admiralty Telegram, No 109, of March 15, had said "You must concert any military operations on a large scale which you consider necessary with General Hamilton when he arrives." But this was not intended to cover, nor did it from its context cover, the total abandonment of the naval attack and the substitution of a purely military effort.

Thus at this Conference on the 22nd two grave decisions became operative: first, that the naval attack should be abandoned in favour of a general assault by the Army, and secondly, that the Army should go back to Alexandria to organize and prepare for this attack, although this process would involve at least three weeks' delay. The Army had in fact arrived too late and too ill-organized to deliver its own surprise attack, but in plenty of time by its very presence to tempt the Navy to desist from theirs.



CAPE HELLES

Photo. Imperial War Museum

All that remained of the lighthouse at Cape Helles after the bombardment. This together with the photograph opposite and others on preceding pages convey some idea of the intensity of the fire from the ships. Most of the buildings shown were anything but specimens of the jerry-builders art: the old fort of Sedd el Bahr in particular being strongly constructed of heavy stone blocks.

The Sacred Ships

One must, however, make great allowances for the Admiral and for the naval point of view which he represented. To statesmen or soldiers, ships in time of war possess no sentimental value. They are engines of war to be used, risked, and if necessary expended in the common cause and for the general policy of the State. To such minds the life of a soldier was every whit as precious as that of a sailor, and an old battleship marked for the scrap-heap was an instrument of war to be expended in a good cause as readily as artillery ammunition is fired to shelter and support a struggling infantry attack. But to an Admiral of this standing and upbringing, these old ships were sacred. They had been the finest ships afloat in the days when he as a young officer had first set foot upon their decks.

The discredit and even disgrace of casting away a ship was ingrained deeply by years of mental training and outlook. The spectacle of this noble structure on which so many loyalties centred, which was the floating foothold of daily life, foundering miserably beneath the waves, appeared as an event shocking and unnatural in its character. Whereas a layman or soldier might have rejoiced that so important an action as that of March 28 could have been fought with a loss of less than thirty British lives and two or three worthless ships, and that so many valuable conclusions had been attained at such a slender cost, Admiral de Robeck was saddened and consternated to the foundations of his being. These emotions were also present around the Admiralty table in Whitehall.

A Discrepancy

There is a distinct discrepancy between the statements of Admiral de Robeck and Sir Ian Hamilton. The Admiral represents that his change of mind was the result of "proposals" made to him by the General, whereas the General states explicitly, "The moment we sat down de Robeck told us he was now quite clear he could not get through without the help of all my troops." The probable explanation is as follows. Until the evening of the 21st the Admiral

thought that the Army were not authorized to storm any part of the Peninsula, but only to occupy the Bular Ims after the Fleet had forced the passage. As soon as he learned that the Army were free to act in any direction, and that Sir Ian Hamilton was ready, if called on by him, to descend in full force upon the southern end of the Peninsula, he immediately abandoned the naval attack, and invited the Army to open the passage.

Whatever may be the explanation, the arguments of Admiral de Robeck's telegram were decisive. At the Admiralty they consolidated all the oppositions to action. At the front they paralysed the Fleet.

* * * * *

General Luman von Sanders in Command

On the 24th Sir Ian Hamilton and his staff sailed for Alexandria, whither all the transports carrying troops through the Mediterranean were directed. On this day also on the enemy's side an important step was taken. General Luman von Sanders had hitherto been the head of the German military mission to Turkey, but had not exercised any executive command. The distress and the apprehensions of the Turks, and the crisis of the operations, induced Enver Pasha on March 24 to summon General Luman von Sanders to Constantinople and to place in his hands the entire control of the Turkish forces available for the defence of the Peninsula. General von Sanders assumed the command on the 26th. "The distribution," he writes, "of the available five divisions for both sides of the Marmora which had obtained until the 26th March had to be completely altered. They had stood until this according to quite other principles, scattered along the whole coast like the frontier guards of the good old times. The enemy on landing would have found resistance everywhere, but no forces or reserves to make a strong and energetic counter-attack."

* * * * *

Lord Kitchener Assumes the Burden

It was with grief that I announced

¹ Luman von Sanders *Five Years in Turkey* pp 81-2



Photo Copyright

TURKISH TROOPS ON THE PENINSULA

After the withdrawal of the ships the authorities responsible for the defence of the Peninsula lost no time in strengthening the land defences. The approaches from the shore were commanded by carefully sited trenches and rifle pits whilst the garrison was heavily reinforced. Here a few Turkish troops are seen manning the early defences which some time before the British attack amounted to little more than an outpost line.

to the Cabinet on the 23rd the refusal of the Admiral and the Admiralty to continue the naval attack, and that it must, at any rate for the time being, be abandoned. Since the crisis of August, 1914, many undertakings had been given on behalf of the Royal Navy, and hitherto all had been made good. It was now again open to the Prime Minister, to Lord Kitchener, to the Cabinet, if they wished, to withdraw from the whole enterprise and to cover the failure by the seizure of Alexandretta. We had lost fewer men killed and wounded than were often incurred in a trench raid on the Western Front, and no vessel of the slightest value had been sunk. I could not have complained of such a decision, however strongly I might have argued against it.

But there was no necessity to argue. Lord Kitchener was always splendid when things went wrong. Confident,

commanding, magnanimous, he made no reproaches. In a few brief sentences he assumed the burden and declared he would carry the operations through by military force. So here again there was no discussion. The agreement of the Admiral and the General on the spot, and the declaration of Lord Kitchener, carried all before them. No formal decision to make a land attack was even noted in the records of the Cabinet or the War Council. When we remember the prolonged discussions and study which had preceded the resolve to make the naval attack, with its limited risk and cost, the silent plunge into this vast military adventure must be regarded as an extraordinary episode. Three months before how safe, how sound, how sure would this decision have been. But now!

When Lord Kitchener undertook to storm the Gallipoli Peninsula with the

army, he was under the impression that a week would suffice to prepare and begin the operation. But when he had reversed the decision of February 16 to send the 29th Division, when he had countermanded and consequently dispersed its transports, when he had deliberately left the issue in suspense until March 10, when he had allowed the division to be embarked otherwise than in order for battle, he had tied his own hands inextricably. He had no choice now but to wait for weeks in the face of ever-accumulating dangers and difficulties, or to abandon the enterprise. This latter solution, however, he at no time entertained. On the contrary he braced himself resolutely for the effort, and events continued to drift steadily forward.

Complete Cessation of the Naval Offensive

I still hoped that the continuance of the naval pressure, even within the limits now prescribed, would yield results which would encourage the Admiral to renew his attack, and thus perhaps spare the army the dreaded ordeal.

However, he did not in the event pursue even limited operations. His energies and those of his staff soon became absorbed in the preparation of the comprehensive and complicated plans necessary for the landing of the army. The *Queen Elizabeth* never fired a gun, and all ships remained inactive against the enemy for another month. From this slough I was not able to lift the operations. All the negative forces began to band themselves together.

Henceforward the defences of the Dardanelles were to be reinforced by an insurmountable mental barrier. A wall of crystal, utterly immovable, began to tower up in the Narrows, and against this wall of inhibition no weapon could be employed. The "No" principle had become established in men's minds, and nothing could ever eradicate it. Never again could I marshal the Admiralty War Group and the War Council in favour of resolute action. Never again could I move the First Sea Lord. "No" had settled down for ever on our councils, crushing with its

deadening weight what I shall ever believe was the hope of the world.

Vain was it for Admiral de Robeck a month later, inspired by the ardent Keyes,¹ to offer to renew the naval attack. His hour had passed. I could never lift the "No" that had descended, and soon I was myself to succumb. Still vainer was it for Admiral Wemyss, when he succeeded de Robeck, to submit the Keyes plans and his own resolute convictions to the new Board of Admiralty. Vain was it for Keyes in October to resign his appointment as Chief of the Staff and hasten personally to London to plead with Lord Kitchener and my successor for permission to attack. "No" had won, with general assent and measureless ruin.

Never again did the British Fleet renew the attack upon the Narrows which in pursuance of their orders they had begun on March 18, and which they then confidently expected to continue after a brief interval. Instead, they waited for nine months the spectators of the sufferings, the immense losses and imperishable glories of the army, always hoping that their hour of intervention would come, always hoping for their turn to run every risk and make every sacrifice, until in the end they had the sorrow and mortification of taking the remains of the army off and steaming away under the cloak of darkness from the scene of irretrievable failure.

* * * *

The Turkish Army Short of Ammunition

And yet if the Navy had tried again they would have found that the door was open. Their improved sweeping forces could have concentrated upon clearing the few remaining mines out of the Eren Keu Bay. All their losses were made good. The battle of March 18 could have been resumed a month later in overwhelming favourable conditions, and had it been resumed it would, in a few hours, have become apparent that it could have only one ending.

¹ Commodore Keyes, afterwards Vice Admiral Sir Roger Keyes, Commander of the Dover Patrol and leader of the attack upon Zeebrugge 1918.

We knew at the time from secret sources, the credit of which was unquestionable, that the Turkish Army was short of ammunition

We had only to resume a gradual naval advance and bombardment to discover the wonderful truth that they had, in fact, scarcely any more ammunition. We now know what we could have so easily found out then, that for the heavy guns which alone could injure the armoured ships, they had not twenty rounds apiece.

Not until Bulgaria joined the Central Powers could a single heavy shell be brought from Germany to Turkey. We know now what most certainly could have been ascertained through any attempt at sweeping that there were no more mines. Not a dozen mines, floating or moored, remained in Constantinople and, as with the shells, no mine could reach the scene for six long months.

Evidence of Ammunition Shortage

The German official account written by the staff officer of Luman von Sanders, the German Commander-in-Chief of the Turks, says —

"Most of the Turkish ammunition had been expended. The medium howitzers and mine field batteries had fired half their supply. For the five 25.5 cm (14-inch) guns there were only 271 rounds, say fifty each, for the eleven 23 cm (9.2-inch) between thirty to fifty per gun. Particularly serious was the fact that the long range H.E. shells, which alone were effective against armour, were nearly entirely used up. Fort Hamidieh had only seventeen of them, Kild Bahr but ten. Also there was no reserve of mines. What, then, was to happen if the battle was resumed on the 19th and following days with undiminished violence?"

The British Official Military Historian says —

"On the evening of March 18 the Turkish Command at the Dardanelles was weighed down by a premonition of fate. More than half the ammunition had been expended and it could not be replaced. It is important to

realize that had Constantinople been abandoned the Turks would have been unable to continue the war. Their only arms and ammunition factories were at the capital and would have been destroyed by the fleet, and the supply of material from Germany would have been impossible. Their inadequate means of fire control had been seriously interrupted. The Turkish gun crews were demoralized, and even the German officers present had apparently little hope of successful resistance if the fleet attacked next day."

And again —

"Of the nine rows of mines many had been in position for six months, and a large proportion of these were believed either to have been carried away by the current or to have sunk to such a depth that ships would not have touched them. For the rest, many were of the old patterns and not at all trustworthy, and owing to the shortage of numbers they were at an average ninety yards apart, more than three times the beam of a ship."

Says the Turkish official account —

"In the attainment of such an important objective, disregarding comparatively small losses, the enemy should have repeated his attack with great force, and in all probability he would have succeeded in forcing the Straits by sea. In Fort Hamidieh there were but five to ten rounds left and the batteries on the European side were equally low."

Strength of the Turkish Resistance on Land

With the knowledge we possessed at the time I had no doubt, as the Admiralty telegrams show, that the military risks far outweighed the naval risks, and that the military cost in soldiers' lives would far exceed the cost in sailors' lives. We suspected at the time the weakness and critical condition of the Turkish defence against the Fleet as now revealed. But no one estimated truly the tremendous strength of the Turkish resistance against the army. Instead of 5,000 casualties,

which was the War Office estimate of the cost of the landing and of a successful and decisive operation, more than 13,000 casualties were incurred to gain only a footing on one tiny indecisive tip of the Peninsula, and many more in efforts to enlarge the ground gained. And this takes no account of the heavy losses and wastage in the months before the Battle of Suvla Bay, of the 40,000 casualties sustained in that battle, and of the 20,000 others incurred before the final evacuation.

Could the pictures, on which we must

presently look, of April 25 with its immortal heroism, of May with its staggering disappointment, of August with its tragedy, and of December with its world-running failure and defeat, have risen before the eyes of those in whose hands the power lay and upon whose heads the responsibility before history must descend, can we doubt that they would have thought it better to persevere resolutely and faithfully with the naval attack in accordance with the orders and undertakings which had been given and received?



THE HINTERLAND AT ANZAC

The sketch reproduced above was made by a German artist and conveys an excellent idea of the type of country on the Gallipoli Peninsula. The sketch was made at a point some distance inland looking westward to the sea. In the distance is the island of Imbros some twenty miles from the mainland. The sea is just visible to the left of the conical hill.

CHAPTER XLIV

THE FIRST DEFEAT OF THE U-BOATS

The First U-Boat Campaign—Pre-War Strength in Submarines—The Unknown Factors—Lord Fisher's Memorandum of 1913—Efficiency of the British Submarine Service—German Declaration of February 4—Defensive Measures—The Indicator Nets—"Q" Boats—The U-Boat Attack Begins—German Losses—The Straits of Dover—Failure of First U-Boat Campaign—The Blockade Controversy with the United States—Sir Edward Grey's Patience and Conciliation

CHRONOLOGY is the key to narrative. Yet where a throng of events are marching abreast, it is inevitable that their progress should be modified by selection and classification. Some must stand on one side until the main press is over, others, taking advantage of any interlude, may hasten forward to periods beyond the general account.

The First U-Boat Campaign

During all the operations at the Dardanelles which a series of chapters has described, the general naval war was proceeding unceasingly. The Grand Fleet still watched its antagonists with tireless vigilance. The Cabinet still laboured to perfect and maintain the blockade against the enemy on the sea and the lawyers across the ocean. A stream of reinforcements and supplies flowed incessantly to France. And lastly, the Admiralty had been called upon to protect the merchant fleets of Britain from a novel and unprecedented form of attack. The first U-boat campaign had begun, and to narrate this episode in an intelligible form it is necessary to look back into the past and to advance somewhat before our time into the future.

* * *

When I went to the Admiralty in 1911 we had 57 submarines (11 A's already obsolete, 11 B's, 33 C's and 2 D's) compared to the German 15, but all our submarines, except the 2 D's, were of a class only capable of operating a short distance from their own coasts.

They could not accompany the Fleet nor make long independent voyages at sea, whereas 11 out of the German 15 were at least as good as our 2 D's. During the three years of preparation for which I was responsible, the submarine service was under Commodore Keyes. As early as 1912 we had begun to visualize in the over-sea submarine a new method of maintaining the close blockade of the German ports which was no longer possible by means of destroyers and surface craft. We therefore sought continually to build larger submarines of "over-sea" or even "ocean-going" capacity. We developed the E class and one or two other vessels of an even larger type.

Great technical difficulties were encountered, and the delays of the contractors and of the Admiralty departments were vexatious in the extreme. The larger type was entirely experimental, and there were not wanting experts who doubted whether the technical difficulties of submerging vessels above a certain size could be surmounted. In addition, owing to the contracts which had been made, practically assigning the monopoly of submarine building to one particular firm, we were at first considerably hampered even in our experimental work. In 1912, on the recommendation of Commodore Keyes, we decided to break these fettering contracts and to place orders for submarines of different patterns on the Clyde and on the Tyne. We also purchased Italian and French submarines, in order to learn all that could be known of their design. Progress was,



Photo Imperial War Museum

SUBMARINE IN DRY DOCK STERN

An unusual photograph exemplifying the fish like appearance of a modern submarine. As the aeroplane is to a large extent modelled upon the bird, the creature best fitted to exploit the air for purposes of locomotion, so builders of the submarine must study the features of the dwellers in deep waters.

however, extremely slow, and beset by doubt at every stage.

Pre-War Strength in Submarines

At the outbreak of the war we had altogether 74 submarines built, 31 building, and 14 ordered or projected. The Germans had 33 built and 28 building. But of the British total of 74 built, only 18 (8 E's and 10 D's) were over-sea boats, whereas of the 33 German submarines built no fewer than 28 were "over-sea" vessels. The situation therefore was that we had a large force of submarines for the defence of our shores against invasion and for the protection of our harbours, but we had not enough "over-sea" boats to maintain a con-

tinuous complete submarine blockade of the Heligoland Bight, nor so many of this class as the Germans.

It would be affectation to pretend that we were contented with this state of affairs. On the other hand, it is probable that if we had launched out into an enormous scheme of submarine building before the war, we should have stimulated to an equal, or perhaps greater, extent a corresponding German programme. Thus would have exposed us to dangers which could never have been compensated by an increase in the number of British submarines. It may well be that all was for the best.

The Unknown Factors

Neither the British nor the German Admiralty understood at the outbreak of hostilities all that submarines could do. It was not until these weapons began to be used under the stern conditions of war that their extraordinary sea-keeping capacity became apparent. It was immediately found on both sides

that the larger class of submarines could remain at sea alone and unaided for eight or ten days at a time without breaking the endurance of their crews. These periods were rapidly doubled and trebled in both Navies. So far from having to return to port in bad weather, it appeared that submarines could ride out a gale better than any other class of vessel. Tried as they were forthwith to the extreme limit of human courage and fortitude, the skilled, highly trained, highly educated officers, sailors and engineers who manned them responded with incredible devotion.

Before the war what submarines could do was one mystery. What they would be ordered to do was another.

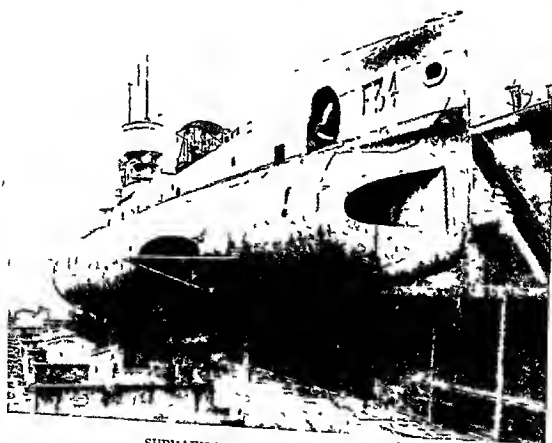
Lord Fisher's Memorandum of 1913

At the end of 1913, Lord Fisher, then unemployed, wrote his celebrated memorandum on the probable use by the Germans of submarines against commerce, and declared that they would certainly not hesitate to sink merchant vessels which they could not bring into port as required by the laws of war. The memorandum owed a great deal to the technical knowledge of Captain S S Hall, who was one of Lord Fisher's intimate followers, but the vision of the old Admiral governed and dominated the argument. I caused this memorandum to be immediately considered by the Sea Lords and by the technical departments.

Neither the First Sea Lord nor I shared Lord Fisher's belief that the Germans would use submarines for sinking unarmed merchantmen without challenge or any means of rescuing the

crews. It was abhorrent to the immemorial law and practice of the sea. Prince Louis wrote to me that Lord Fisher's brilliant paper "was marred by this suggestion."

But if we did not believe that a civilized nation would ever resort to such a practice, we were sure that if they did, they would unite the world against them. In particular it seemed certain that a Power offending in this way would be unable to distinguish between enemy and neutral ships, and that mistakes would be made which, quite apart from moral indignation, would force powerful neutrals to declare war upon a pirate nation. In his diagnosis of the German character Lord Fisher was right and the Admiralty was wrong. But even if we had adopted his view it is not easy to see what particular action could have been taken before the war to guard against such an attack.



SUBMARINE IN DRY DOCK. BOW

The E 34 one of the class of vessels responsible for some of the most valuable service given by submarines during the Great War is seen here in dry dock with her bows towards the camera. The photograph on this page and on that opposite show clearly the design of the type of submarine which served the requirements of the Grand Fleet in 1914-18.

The submarine is the only vessel of war which does not fight its like. This is not to say that combats have not taken place between submarines, but these are exceptional and usually inconclusive. It follows therefore that the submarine fleet on one side ought not to be measured against the submarine fleet on the other. Its strength should be regulated not according to the number of enemy submarines, but according to your own war plan and the special circumstances of your country. If Germany had had four times as many submarines at the beginning of the war than was in fact the case, she would have gained a great advantage and placed us immediately in serious danger. It would have been no answer to this danger to have multiplied our submarines by four, nor should we have exposed Germany to an equal danger had we done so.

* * * *

Efficiency of the British Submarine Service

If I resist any impeachment of the Boards of Admiralty over whom I presided for their submarine policy before the war, still less will I admit that the British Submarine Service was in any way inferior in skill or enterprise to that of Germany. On the contrary, I claim and will adduce proofs that their exploits proved them month by month inconsistently superior. But they suffered from one overwhelming disadvantage which it was not in our power to remove, viz a dearth of targets. Except for a few sudden dashes to sea by fast vessels, the occasional unexpected voyage of a single cruiser, or a carefully prepared, elaborately protected, swiftly executed parade of the High Sea Fleet, the German Navy remained locked in its torpedo-proof harbours, and outside of the Baltic all German commerce was at an end.

On the other hand, every sea was crowded with British merchant craft—dozens of large vessels arriving and departing every day, while our fleets were repeatedly in the open sea and our patrolling cruisers and merchant cruisers maintained a constant and unbroken watch

and distant blockade. If the positions had been reversed and had we permitted ourselves to attack defenceless merchantmen, far more formidable results would have been achieved. Nor is this a matter of assertion. It is capable of proof. As will be seen when the exploits of British submarines in the Sea of Marmora are recounted, one submarine alone—E11—three times passed and re-passed through the terrible dangers of the tenfold minefields, of the Nagara net, and of the long vigilantly guarded reaches of the Dardanelles, remained in the Marmora ninety-six days (forty-seven in one spell) and sunk single-handed 101 vessels, including a battleship, a modern destroyer and three gunboats. This prodigious feat of Commander Nasmith, V C, though closely rivalled by that of Commander Boyle, V C, in E14, remains unsurpassed in the history of submarine warfare.

* * * *

German Declaration of February 4

On February 4, 1915, the German Admiralty issued the following declaration—

"All the waters surrounding Great Britain and Ireland, including the whole of the English Channel, are hereby declared to be a war zone. From February 18 onwards every enemy merchant vessel found within this war zone will be destroyed without its being always possible to avoid danger to the crews and passengers.

"Neutral ships will also be exposed to danger in the war zone, and in view of the misuse of neutral flags ordered on January 31 by the British Government,¹ and owing to unforeseen incidents to which naval warfare is liable, it is impossible to avoid attacks being made on neutral ships in mistake for those of the enemy."

We were now confronted with the situation which Lord Fisher had foreseen in his Memorandum of 1913. The event did not, however, cause the

¹ We had authorized recourse to this time honoured naval stratagem, knowing well the embarrassment it would cause to the enemy submarines.



A Q' BOAT PUTTING TO SEA

Photo Critb

'Q' boats or mystery ships as they were sometimes spoken of were one of the most effective devices for trapping submarines. As J. M. Barrie might have said, they wore a false face. They masqueraded as merchant vessels of the most innocent and inoffensive type whilst hidden on disappearing platforms or as in the above photograph secreted behind canvas upperworks were guns of sufficient calibre to sink the largest submarine.

Admiralty serious alarm Our information showed that the Germans could not possess more than twenty to twenty-five submarines capable of blockading the British Isles As these could only work in three reliefs, not more than seven or eight were likely to be at work simultaneously and having regard to the enormous volume of traffic moving in and out of the very numerous ports of the United Kingdom, it seemed certain that no appreciable effect would in fact be produced upon our trade, provided always that our ships continued boldly to put to sea

On the other hand, we were sure that the German declaration and the inevitable accidents to neutrals arising out of it would offend and perhaps embroil the United States and that in any case our position for enforcing the blockade would be greatly strengthened We looked forward to a sensible abatement of the pressure which the American Government was putting

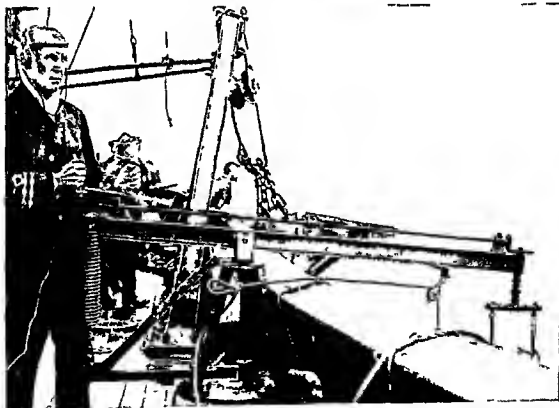
upon us to relax our system of blockade, and we received a whole armoury of practical arguments with which to reinforce our side of the contention We consulted long and carefully together at the Admiralty on successive days, and thereafter I announced that we would publish every week the sinkings of merchant vessels effected by the German submarines, together with the numbers of ships entering and leaving British ports

* * * *

Defensive Measures

Meanwhile we made the most strenuous exertions to increase our resources for meeting the attack and to devise every method of countering it

Regarding the cross-Channel communications as our first and vital care we netted in the Straits of Dover, and established thorough trawler and destroyer patrols New Divisions were now passing almost every week to



LISTENING FOR SUBMARINES

Photo Imperial War Museum

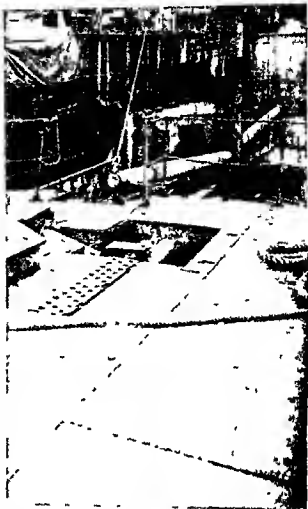
One of the most valuable instruments included in the equipment of ships during the Great War was the hydrophone a device employed to detect the near presence of a submarine The hydrophone consisted of a receiver which when dropped into the water picked up the vibrations of a submarine's propellers and passed them by means of communicating wires and headphones to a trained listener stationed on deck

France, and their conduct and escort required ceaseless and intricate precautions. We also gave special attention to the North Channel (between Scotland and Ireland), the Southampton-Havre route, and bays and sheltered places where enemy submarines might be supposed to rest. Elaborate instructions for dealing with or avoiding submarine attacks were also given to the captains of British merchant ships, and many other measures were taken as recorded in the *Official Naval History*¹

The Indicator Nets

Apart from arming and commissioning the enormous Mosquito Fleet on which we chiefly relied, our two principal devices for destroying the German submarines were the Burcham Indicator Nets and the Decoy Ships, afterwards called the "Q" boats. The Indicator Net was a light flexible curtain of thin steel wire woven into 6 or 10-foot meshes and supplied in lengths of 200 yards. These were laid, clipped together, in long lines across particular channels, and their floats were watched continually by armed trawlers. We had tried them, not without some risk, on one of our own submarines with good results. The submergence of the glass buoys on which the net was hung or the automatic ignition of a calcium light betrayed immediately the presence of the submarine. The net trailing backward wrapped itself around the vessel with a good chance of entangling its propeller, while at the same time a tell-tale buoy attached to the net by a long line floated on the surface, and enabled the hunting vessels to follow their submarine enemy wherever he went. At least 1,000 miles of these nets were ordered during the first months of 1915, and by February 13 seventeen miles of the

¹ Vol. II pages 271-2-3



The Imperial War Museum
A DEVICE OF THE "Q" BOATS

This photograph taken on the deck of the "Q" ship *Hyderabad* shows a quick firing gun mounted on a disappearing platform. It was the work of a few seconds to bring such a weapon into action against the unsuspecting crew of an enemy submarine.

Straits of Dover were already obstructed by guarded nets. Such was the theory, but needless to say it encountered many difficulties and disappointments in practice.

"Q" Boats

The device of the Decoy Ships was also simple, the idea arose in the following manner. In the previous September a small steamer, plying between St. Malo and Southampton with fruit and vegetables, had been fired at by a German submarine. Admiral Sir Hedworth Meux, who commanded at Portsmouth, came to the Admiralty to see me on general business, and in conversation it was suggested that a gun might be concealed on this small

ship under the fruit and vegetables. This was accordingly done. No opportunity of using it occurred, but the idea was revived under the renewed threat of extended submarine warfare.

Early in February I gave directions for a number of vessels to be constructed or adapted for the purpose of trapping and ambushing German submarines. For the most part they were ordinary tramp steamers, but some were to be specially constructed of the build and type of Norwegian fishing vessels. These vessels carried concealed guns which by a pantomime trick of trap doors and shutters could suddenly come into action. Great ingenuity was shown by the Admiralty departments in developing this idea, and the use of these vessels afterwards afforded opportunity for some of the most brilliant and daring stratagems in the naval war.

In addition every form of scientific warfare against submarines was perseveringly studied. Already the microphone or hydrophone for detecting the beat of a submarine propeller in the distance had been discovered, but at this date it was only in an experimental condition. Bomb-lances, explosive sweeps, Actæon nets (or necklaces of explosives) were eagerly and simultaneously developed. A close and fruitful union between the scientist, the inventor, and the submarine officer was established, the best brains of the Navy were concentrated on the problem, and no idea, technical or tactical, was spurned by the Admiralty Staff.

* * * *

The U-Boat Attack Begins

The German U-boat campaign, or the so-called blockade of the British Isles, began as promised on February 18, and that same day a British merchant ship was torpedoed in the Channel. By the end of the first week eleven British ships had been attacked, of which seven had been sunk. In the same period no less than 1,381 merchant vessels had arrived in, or sailed from, British ports. The second week of the attack was completely ineffective: only three ships were assailed and all escaped. The arrivals and departures aggregated 1,474

By the end of February we were sure that the basis on which we were acting was sound. British trade was proceeding as usual, and the whole of our transportation across the Channel flowed on, division by division, uninterrupted. We continued to publish the weekly figures during the whole of March. In the four weeks of that month upwards of six thousand vessels reached or left British ports, out of which only twenty-one were sunk, and these together aggregated only 65,000 tons. April confirmed the conclusions of March: only twenty-three ships were sunk out of over six thousand arrivals and departures, and of these six were neutrals and only eleven, aggregating 22,000 tons, were British. The failure of the German submarine campaign was therefore patent to the whole world.

German Losses

Meanwhile the Germans were themselves already paying heavily for their policy. At least four U-boats out of their small numbers available had been destroyed. On March 1 one became entangled in the Indicator Nets off Start Bay near Dartmouth, and was blown up under water the next day by an explosive sweep. On the 4th the Dover nets and destroyers detected, chased and sunk U8, her entire crew being rescued and made prisoners. On the 6th a hostile submarine, which proved finally to be U12, was sighted off Aberdeen, and after a four days' hunt of incredible perseverance and skill by our small craft, was destroyed and ten survivors taken prisoner.

On the 16th a still more remarkable incident occurred. Commander Weddigen, who since his exploits in sinking the three cruisers off the Dutch coast in September, 1914, had become a German national hero, sank a merchant ship off the south coast of Ireland, after taking from it a small gun as a trophy. He was returning to Germany on the 18th when, near the Pentland Firth, he fell in with the Grand Fleet at exercise. The Fourth Battle Squadron was now commanded by Admiral Sturdee flying his flag in the *Dreadnought*. The luck which had brought about the Battle of the Falkland

Islands had clearly not deserted Admiral Sturdee, for in ten minutes the *Dreadnought*, handled with great skill by its captain and navigating officer and aided by the *Temeraire*, rammed the submarine. Her bows reared out of the water revealing her number, U29, as she sank for ever to the bottom of the sea with every soul on board. So perished the destroyer of the *Cressy*, the *Aboukir* and the *Hogue*.

Most of the other U-boats returning to Germany had rough and grim experiences to report. One had been caught in the nets off Dover and only escaped after fearful adventures, another had been rammed by a well-handled merchant ship, the *Thordis*, and with difficulty managed to crawl home in a damaged condition, a third narrowly escaped at the end of a three hours' chase by the destroyer *Ghurka*. There were many other incidents of a similar character.

The Straits of Dover

It was in the Straits of Dover that we had concentrated our greatest efforts. It was here that we achieved our most complete success. Early in April, U32 was entangled in the Dover nets, and preferred to return all round the north of Scotland rather than renew her experiences. The account which she gave to the German naval staff of the defences and barriers in the Straits of Dover was such that all U-boats were absolutely forbidden to attempt to pass the Straits, all must make a detour "north about" round Scotland on their way to our western approaches. This prohibition continued in force for more than a year. The eastern waters of the Channel thus became completely clear, and no sinkings within the Dover cordon occurred after the middle of April.

We did not, however, know how well our measures and the exertions of Admiral Hood, who carried them out and constantly elaborated them, had succeeded. Injustice was done to this officer when, upon Lord Fisher's advice, I transferred him, about the middle of that month, to another command and appointed in his stead Admiral Bacon, whose mechanical aptitudes and scientific

attainments seemed specially to be required on this critical station. It was not until the middle of May that I became aware, from constant study of our gathering information, how excellent had been Admiral Hood's work. Only a few more days were left me at the Admiralty. There was time, however, to repair the injustice, and almost my last official act was to appoint him to the command of the 3rd Battle-Cruiser Squadron. This great prize he accepted with the utmost delight. Alas, it led him to a glorious doom in the Battle of Jutland!

Failure of First U-Boat Campaign

Surveying the situation in April, it was evident that not only had the Germans failed in the slightest degree to impede the movements of British trade, troops and supplies, but that they had themselves suffered heavy and disproportionate losses in the vital units on which their whole policy depended. By May their premature and feeble campaign had been completely broken, and for nearly eighteen months, in spite of tragic incidents, we suffered no appreciable inconvenience.

All the measures which we had taken, and all the organizations which had been set on foot, to deal with this unprecedented form of attack, were, however, developed and perfected with the utmost energy. Our merchant skippers were made increasingly familiar with all the methods by which submarine attack should be encountered or avoided. The vigilance and ingenuity of our multiplying Mosquito Fleet was stimulated by a generous system of rewards. The Indicator Nets were improved, and produced in great quantities. Tireless scientific research pursued the secret of detecting the presence of a submerged submarine through the agency of the hydrophone. Lastly, the Decoy Ships were increased in numbers, and their ambushes and stratagems raised to a fine art. To the providential warning of this impotent campaign and the exertions made in consequence of it, we were to owe our safety in the terrible days which were destined eventually to come upon us.

The Blockade Controversy with the United States

Results scarcely less to our advantage were experienced in our relations with the United States, on which the whole efficiency of our blockade of the Central Empires depended. This is not the place to discuss the grave and intricate questions of international law which had arisen since the beginning of the war between Great Britain and the United States and other neutral nations. The arguments on both sides were technical and interminable, and whole libraries can be filled with them. Underlying all the legal disputes and manœuvres, was that great fund of kinship and goodwill towards us, of sympathy for the cause of the Allies, of affection for France and of indignation against Germany, which always swayed, and in the end triumphantly dominated, American action. But in spite of this we might well at this time have been forced to give up the whole efficiency of our blockade to avoid a rupture with the United States.

There is nowadays a strong tendency to underestimate the real danger of an adverse decision in America at this period. The National tradition of the United States was not favourable to us. The Treaty with Prussia in 1793 in defence of "the freedom of the seas" constituted the first international relationship of the American Republic. The war of 1812, not forgotten in America, had arisen out of these very questions of neutrality. The established rules of international law did not cover the conditions which prevailed in the great struggle. The whole conception of conditional contraband was affected by the fact that the distinction between armies and nations had largely passed away. The old laws of blockade were, as has been shown, inapplicable in the presence of the submarine.

It was not always possible to harmonize our action with the strict letter of the law. From this arose a series of delicate and deeply perplexing discussions in which rigid legalists across

the Atlantic occupied a very strong position.

Sir Edward Grey's Patience and Conciliation

There were in addition serious political dangers. Irish and German influences were powerful and active, a strong party in the Senate was definitely anti-British, the State Department was jealously and vigilantly watched, lest it should show partiality to Great Britain. The slightest mistake in dealing with the American situation might at this juncture have created a crisis of the first magnitude. It was the memorable achievement of Sir Edward Grey, seconded by our Ambassador at Washington, Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, that this peril was averted. British and American gratitude also illumines the memory of the United States Ambassador in London, Mr. Page, whose wisdom and generous nobility guarded the English-speaking world and its destiny from measureless injury.

It was in these issues that the first German U-boat campaign gave us our greatest assistance. The German announcement threatening neutral as well as British merchant ships had altered the whole position of our controversies with America. A great relief became immediately apparent. The torpedoing at the end of February of the Norwegian steamer *Belridge*, bound from America with oil for the Dutch Government, was another event which turned the current of American irritation from the British blockade to the German outrages. All the forces friendly to the Allies throughout the Union were animated and strengthened, and German influences proportionately cast down. The stringency of our measures against Germany could be increased without deranging the precarious equipoise of our relations with the great Republic. Sir Edward Grey, aided and guided by Mr. Page, was enabled by processes of patience, tact and conciliation to sustain our position without quarrelling through the whole of March and April, and in May an event occurred which was decisive.

CHAPTER XLV

THE INCREASING TENSION

Lord Fisher's Attitude—The Battle Cruiser Fleet—Lord Fisher and the Sea Lords—His Position Defined—Anxieties about Ammunition—Correspondence with Lord Fisher—The Munitions Crisis—Grave Embarrassments—Admiralty and War Office Compared—Growing Political Discontent

APRIL was a month of painful and harassing suspense. Sir Ian Hamilton's Army was repacking at Alexandria, Admiral de Robeck's attention was absorbed in preparation for the landing. The Turks were concentrating, organizing and fortifying Italy and the Balkans trembled in the balance. Our relations with the United States were most delicate. The position on and behind the Russian front caused profound anxiety. A complete breakdown in the methods of munition supply by the War Office plainly impended. The political situation grew tense.

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Lord Fisher's Attitude

After March 18 the attitude of the First Sea Lord had become one of quasi-detachment. He was greatly relieved that the burden had now been assumed by the Army. He approved every operational telegram which I or the Chief of the Staff drafted for him. In the end he assented to whatever steps were considered necessary for the proper support of the Army. But while he welcomed every sign of the dispatch of troops, he grudged every form of additional naval aid. He endeavoured repeatedly to turn my mind from the Dardanelles back to the northern theatre, where, however, there could not be any serious naval operation on our initiative for many months. He evinced increasing concern about the situation in the North Sea.

Although I did not share Lord Fisher's

anxiety, real or assumed, about the North Sea, I thought this month of April was a critical one. The Germans must know that we had a very considerable Fleet, including some of our best modern ships, withdrawn from the main and for the Navy decisive theatre. We hoped that they would believe that the forces at the Dardanelles were even larger than they were. We had sent several of the dummy battleships to the Mediterranean, hoping thereby to tempt the enemy to battle in the North Sea.

The War Staff orders for the attack on the Dardanelles approved by Lord Fisher contained the following passage —

"A number of merchant vessels have been altered to represent 'Dreadnought' battleships and cruisers, and are indistinguishable from them at 3 or 4 miles distance. They should be used with due precaution to prevent their character being discovered, and should be shown as part of the Fleet off the entrance to the Dardanelles, as if held in reserve. *They may mislead the Germans as to the margin of British strength in Home Waters.*"

We now know that they completely deceived the Turks, who identified and reported one to Germany as the *Tiger*. When I saw the First Sea Lord cordially agree in such a policy of courting battle, I could not take very seriously his general attitude of apprehension. He knew perfectly well that we were strong enough to fight, and no one would

¹ *W. studies*

have been better pleased had the battle begun

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The Battle-Cruiser Fleet

I devised and carried through at this time the formation of the Battle-Cruiser Fleet. This organisation was to consist of three squadrons, each of three battle-cruisers, each attended by a light cruiser squadron of four of our latest and fastest vessels, together with the M flotilla of our swiftest destroyers. The central conception of this force was speed. It presented a combination of speed and power far superior to any naval force at the disposal of the Germans. In the first instance, most of the light cruisers belonged to the Town class and could not steam more than 27 knots, but the *Arethusas* were now coming rapidly into commission, and would effectually improve the speed of the squadrons. In order to form this Fleet I telegraphed to the Commonwealth Government, asking them to place the *Australia* at our disposal. This they did with the utmost goodwill and characteristic loyalty to the general interest.

* * * *

Lord Fisher and the Sea Lords

On April 7 the Second, Third and Fourth Sea Lords asked Lord Fisher by minute to reassure them on certain points connected with the conduct of the war. Was he satisfied that we were not putting in jeopardy the principle that the Grand Fleet should be always in such a position and of such strength that it could be at all times ready to meet the entire Fleet of the enemy with confident assurance as to the result? The attack on the Dardanelles, they said, was probably from the point of view of high policy quite correct, but could we afford the loss in ships and the expenditure on ammunition? In conclusion the Sea Lords asked Lord Fisher to assure them that the whole policy had his concurrence, and that he was satisfied with it.

His Position Defined

Lord Fisher replied formally by minute the same day. He stated that

he was entirely in agreement with the fundamental principle of the maintenance of the strength of the Grand Fleet.

"The Dardanelles operation" (he continued) "is undoubtedly one the political result of which, if successful, will be worth some sacrifice in *matériel* and personnel, it will certainly shorten the period of the war by bringing in fresh Allies in the Eastern theatre, and will break the back of the German-Turkish alliance, besides opening up the Black Sea."

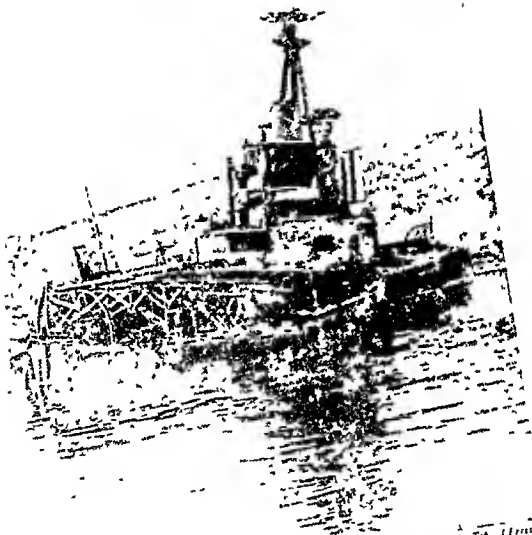
"It was with hesitation that I consented to this undertaking, in view of the necessarily limited force of ships which could be devoted to it, of the shortage of shell and cordite, and of the factor of uncertainty which must always obtain when ships attack land fortifications and mined areas under their protection."

"But, as you state, these high points of policy must be decided by the Cabinet, and in this case the real advantages to be gained caused me eventually to consent to their view, subject to the strict limitation of the Naval Forces to be employed so that our position in the decisive theatre—the North Sea—should not be jeopardised in any one arm."

"I am of opinion at the present time that our supremacy is secure in Home Waters and that the forces detached are not such as to prejudice a decisive result should the High Seas Fleet come out to battle. But at the same time I consider that we have reached the absolute limit, and that we must stand or fall by the issue, for we can send out no more help of any kind. I have expressed this view very clearly to the First Lord, and should there at a later period be any disposition on the part of the Cabinet to overrule me on this point, I shall request my Naval colleagues to give their support in upholding my view."

The position of the First Sea Lord is thus very clearly defined. He is seen to be formally and deliberately identified with the enterprise. When notice was given of a Parliamentary question¹ asking whether the First Sea Lord had

¹ Not eventually put



A DUMMY BATTLESHIP AGROUND AT MUDROS

As explained in the text the War Staff orders for the naval attack at the Dardanelles provided for a number of merchant vessels altered to represent battleships to take part in the operations. This ingenious device was successful inasmuch as the Turks were completely deceived. They believed the Allied Fleet to be stronger than it was and actually identified and reported one of the dummy ships to Germany as H.M.S. Tiger.

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agreed to the attack of March 18, he wrote across the draft answer "If Lord Fisher had not approved of this operation, he would not now be First Sea Lord" There is therefore no dispute upon the main issue But it was not possible, having gone so far, to say, as he did in a letter to me of April 12, "I will not send another rope yarn" Great responsibilities had been incurred a most serious operation impended, the Army was about to land It was imperative that it should be properly supported Subject to the paramount requirement of our safety in the North Sea, everything that was needed and could reasonably be spared, had to be given

Anxieties about Ammunition

Admiral de Robeck now telegraphed for a number of officers to assist in the landing Lord Fisher was reluctant to accede

to this request, and wished also to impose restrictions upon the employment not only of the *Queen Elizabeth*, but also of the *Agamemnon* and *Lord Nelson*, which would to a very large extent have deprived the Army of their support I could not honourably agree to this, and my view was accepted But every officer, every man, every ship, every round of ammunition required for the Dardanelles, became a cause of friction and had to be fought for by me, not only with the First Sea Lord but to a certain extent with his naval colleagues The labour of this was enormous, but although in the end I allowed no request which reached me from the Fleet to pass unheeded, the process was exhausting I have no doubt that many requests perished before they reached me, or were not proffered because it was known they would not be welcome All the time there

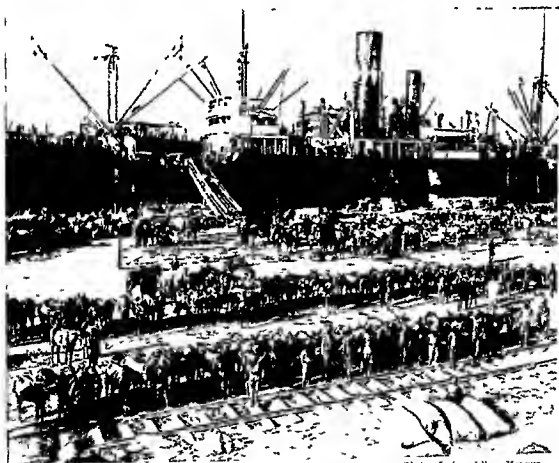


Photo Imperial War Museum

INDIAN TROOPS EMBARKING FOR THE DARDANELLES

The troops of the Allied forces on Gallipoli displayed so much desperate gallantry that it would be invidious to single out units or brigades for special mention A word of praise might however, be given to the Indian Brigade to its British and Indian officers and to the men they commanded for the fighting qualities they at all times displayed and for the high morale maintained in the face of heavy casualties throughout many months of severe fighting

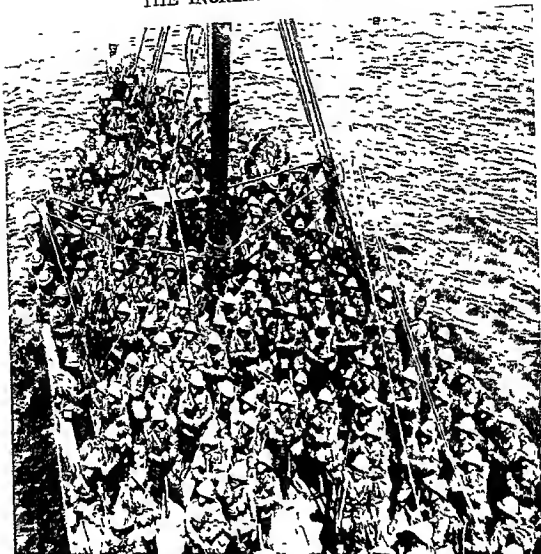


Photo Imperial War Museum

REINFORCEMENTS THAT ARRIVED TOO LATE

A photograph taken from the bridge of a vessel engaged in transporting troops from Mudros to Gallipoli. The troops on board belong to the Lancashire Fusiliers of the 42nd Division. This fine Territorial Division did not reach Gallipoli until May 1915. Had they been available for landing on the Peninsula on April 26 or 27 their presence might well have turned the scale if they had pushed on through the valiant but weary remnants of the 29th Division.

were ample supplies of ammunition and many powerful naval reinforcements available which could have been sent without affecting our security in the North Sea. This is proved by the fact that they were subsequently sent on a far greater scale than was now in question, without evil consequences or undue risk and by a different Board of Admiralty.

Correspondence with Lord Fisher

On April 11 I wrote to Lord Fisher —

Seriously, my friend, are you not a little unfair in trying to spite this operation by side winds and small points when you have accepted it in principle? It is hard on me that you should keep on like

this—every day something fresh and it is not worthy of you or the great business we have in hand together.

You know how deeply anxious I am to work with you. Had the Dardanelles been excluded, our co-operation would have been impossible. It is not right now to make small difficulties or add to the burden which in these times we have to bear.

Excuse frankness—but friends have this right, and to colleagues it is a duty.

He replied the next day with equal frankness —

Never in all my whole life have I ever before so sacrificed my convictions as I



Photo in Imperial War Museum

FRENCH TROOPS IN THE AEGEAN

The French contingent who became responsible for the right flank of the Allied line at Gallipoli, took part in much of the severe fighting on the slopes of Achi Baba. The photograph reproduced above shows drafts sent out as reinforcements nearing the shores of the Peninsula.

have done to please you!—THAT'S A FACT! Off my own bat I suggested the immediate despatch of *Lord Nelson* and *Agamemnon* (hoping they would shield *Elizabeth* and *Inflexible*!) De Robeck will hoist his flag in the *Lord Nelson* you may be sure, instead of the *Vengeance*, his former Flagship. For the work in hand the *Vengeance* quite as good for close action. Nevertheless I say no more. The outside world is quite certain that I have pushed you and not you me! So far as I know the Prime Minister is the solitary person who knows to the contrary. I have not said one word to a soul on the subject except to Crease¹ and Wilson and Oliver and Bartolome, and you may be sure these four never open their mouths!

Indirectly I've worked up Kitchener from the very beginning via Fitzgerald.

I think it's going to be a success, but I want to lose the oldest ships and to be

¹ Captain Crease, Naval Assistant to the First Sea Lord

chary of our invaluable officers and men for use in the decisive theatre.

And again April 20 —

I am quite sick about our submarines and mines and not shooting at Zeppelins (who never can go higher than 2,000 yards and fight cruisers bound to bring them down). Really yesterday had it not been for the Dardanelles forcing me to stick to you through thick and thin I would have gone out of the Admiralty never to return, and sent you a postcard to get Sturdee up at once in my place. You would then be quite happy!!!

* * * *

The Munitions Crisis

Since the beginning of the year the disquietude of several of the principal members of the War Council about the supply of munitions for the army had been continually increasing. Mr Lloyd George and Mr Balfour, who with Lord Kitchener and me were members of a

Cabinet Committee set up in January to investigate the position, were insistent that the measures of the War Office were in no way proportioned to our needs. Many hundreds of thousands of men had joined the colours and were now in training. The expansion of the British Army to 70 or even to 100 divisions had been designed, yet rifles had not been ordered to supply more than two-thirds of the men actually recruited. The orders placed for artillery were utterly inadequate. The new and special requirements of the war seemed still further neglected. No effective organization for the production of machine-guns on the scale on which they were needed had been even planned. The supplies of shell of all kinds, particularly high explosive, and the provision of medium and heavy artillery were on a pitifully small scale. The manufacture of trench mortars, bombs, and hand grenades was hardly begun.

When complaint was made to Lord Kitchener, the Secretary of State for War and his advisers replied that every factory and source of supply was working to its utmost power, and that the orders already given were far in excess of the capacity to produce, and that the deliveries even of the reduced amounts were enormously in arrear. This was true, but not exhaustive. It was urged that measures out of all proportion to anything previously conceived must be taken to broaden the sources of supply. The War Office replied that they had already done everything that was possible at the moment, and that the fruits of their exertions would not be apparent for many months. They adduced a great number of examples of their action and showed the orders they were placing abroad, principally in America and Japan. All this was still regarded as quite insufficient, and the argument on both sides became fierce.

Grave Embarrassments

The critics contended that the Ordnance and Contract branches of the War Office knew nothing whatever about the production of munitions on the gigantic scale required, and that they were far too small and weak a body to deal with these immense and complicated problems of

manufacture and industry. To this the War Office rejoined that they could not take the responsibility of allowing these vital matters to pass out of the domain of the professional soldiers into the hands of civilians, politicians or business men, however well-meaning and enthusiastic. Thus on both sides the fires were banked up, and temperature and pressure rose together.

The stress increased with every week that passed. The demands of the Army grew incessantly. Each new division that took the field began to consume munitions of every kind on growing scales. Great numbers of troops at home were seen utterly unequipped. From the front flowed a torrent of complaints. Simultaneously the outputs fell hopelessly below the promises of the contractors. Lord Kitchener dreaded to send fresh divisions to the front even when they were equipped, for fear of revealing still further the inadequacy of the main plant by which they could be nourished. He made every conceivable personal exertion, but nothing in his training as a soldier or as an administrator had fitted him to organize this mighty and novel sphere. His assistants were few and rigid, and he himself took a strict view of the importance of military control.

Admiralty and War Office Compared

From the indignation which was freely expressed to me by my colleagues during this month of April, I could not doubt that an explosion of a very violent kind was approaching. The Admiralty was in an easier position. We had maintained in peace incomparably the largest Navy in the world, and our sources of supply were upon the same scale. The British Army, on the other hand, was based on arsenals narrowly measured by our tiny peace establishments. The Navy had expanded from a broad basis to perhaps double its size, the Army from its restricted basis had been called upon to expand to the equivalent of ten or fifteen-fold.

At the outbreak of the war we had placed very large orders for everything that the Navy needed with the great firms and dockyards which stood behind the Fleet. I had kept alive the Coventry works by special measures in 1913, thus

giving us a new additional source of heavy gun production. Even before Lord Fisher came to the Admiralty in November, 1914, we had set on foot, in accordance with maturely considered pre-war plans, a great volume of production. The old Admiral's impulse and inspiration supervened on this with cumulative effect. We were thus able, readily and easily, to cope with the developments which the course of the war and the progress of invention required. Already in January and February we were at full blast, and on the whole well ahead with our work in every department.

Our task had not been comparable in difficulty with that of the War Office. In fact, our very efficiency by absorbing much of the existing capacity for armament production aggravated their troubles. Still, the fact remained that the War Office were not solving their problems, and that there was no prospect of their doing so upon the existing lines.

Growing Political Discontent

Growing wrath and fear were not confined to the War Council. Lord Kitchener's embarrassments compelled him to restrict in the most drastic terms the demands of the armies in the field in respect of all the supplies they needed most. He saw himself forced to give rulings upon the proportion of machine guns, high explosive shell and heavy artillery which seemed absurd and almost wicked to those who did not know his difficulties. Tension grew

between the staff at General Headquarters and the War Office. The Army at the front carried its complaints through innumerable channels to Parliament and the Press, and though patriotism and the censorship prevented public expression, the tide of anxiety and anger rose day by day.

Well would it have been if in the solemn moment when we first drew the sword a National Government resting on all parties had been formed. In those August days when our peaceful and, but for the Navy, almost unarmed people stood forth against the Aggressor, all hearts beat together. There was a unity and comradeship never after equalled. All were ardent for the Cause, and there had been no time to make mistakes in method. Then was the moment to have proclaimed National Government and National Service together. This was certainly my wish. But the moment was lost. The Conservative Party, its power magnified in the atmosphere of war, was left free from all responsibility to watch the inevitable mistakes, shortcomings, surprises and disappointments which the struggle had in store. Its leaders had held themselves hitherto under a public-spirited restraint, silent but passionate spectators. They could endure the strain no longer. Thus both from within and from without, at the War Office and in the Admiralty, in France and at the Dardanelles, tension grew into crisis, and crisis rose to climax.



Photo Imperial War Museum

THE BASE AT MUDROS

CHAPTER XLVI

THE BATTLE OF THE BEACHES

APRIL 25, 1915

Description of the Gallipoli Peninsula—Three Main Alternatives—Problem of Attack and Defence—A Grimly Balanced Trial of Strength—The Twenty-fifth of April—At the Turkish Headquarters—"V" Beach—"W" Beach—"X" Beach—The Anzac Landing—Mustapha Kemal—A Bitter Struggle—April 26 at Helles—Exhaustion on Both Sides—Absence of British Reserves—Appeal to Lord Kitchener for Reinforcements—The Turkish Counter-attack Repulsed—A Grim Situation

THE Gallipoli Peninsula stretches into the *Ægean* Sea for 52 miles, and is at its broadest 12 miles across. But *its* *ankle*, the isthmus which joins it to the mainland, is only 3½ miles wide near the village of Bulair, and at *its* *neck*, opposite Maidos at the south-western end, the width is scarcely six miles.

Description of the Gallipoli Peninsula

This very considerable area is mountainous, rugged, and broken by ravines. Four main hill features dominate the ground: the semi-circular chain of hills surrounding Suvla Bay rising to 600 or 700 feet, the Sari Bair Mountain just over a 2,000 feet high, the Kilit Bahr Plateau opposite the Narrows between 600 and 700 feet high, and about 6 miles from the south-western tip the peak of Achi Baba, also 700 feet high.

Outside the Straits the landing-places are comparatively few. The cliffs fall precipitously to the sea and are pierced only by occasional narrow gullies. The surface of the Peninsula is covered for the most part with scrub, interspersed with patches of cultivation. A considerable supply of water in springs and wells exists throughout the region, particularly in the neighbourhood of Suvla Bay. One other feature of practical significance requires to be noted. The tip of the Peninsula from Achi Baba to Cape Helles has the appearance from the sea of being a gradual slope, but in fact this all-important tip

is spoon-shaped, and thus to a very large extent protected by its rim from direct naval fire.

The operations which were now to take place presented to both sides the most incalculable and uncertain problems of war. To land a large army in the face of a long-warmed and carefully prepared defence by brave troops and modern weapons was to attempt what had never yet been dared and what might well prove impossible. On the other hand, the mysterious mobility of amphibious power imposed equal perils and embarrassments upon the defenders.

Three Main Alternatives

General Liman von Sanders knew that an army estimated at between 80,000 and 90,000 was being concentrated at Mudros, in Egypt or close at hand. Where and when would they strike? There were obviously three main alternatives, any one of which might lead to fatal consequences—the Asiatic shore, the Bulair Isthmus and the southern end of the Peninsula. Of these the Asiatic shore gave the best prospects for the landing and manœuvring of a large army. The Bulair Isthmus, if taken, cut the communications of all the troops on the Peninsula both by land and sea, and thus in von Sanders's words, "afforded the prospect of a strategic decision." Thirdly, to quote von Sanders, "The strip of coast on each side of Gaba Tepe was the landing-place best suited to

obtaining a quick decision, as a broad depression interrupted by only one gentle rise led straight from it to Maidos." There were also at the southern end of the Peninsula the landing-places in the neighbourhood of Cape Helles giving access to the peak of Achi Baba whence the forts on the Narrows were directly commanded. The enemy had no means of knowing which of these widely separated and potentially decisive objectives would receive the impending attack.

¹ Liman von Sanders *Five Years in Turkey*, page 80

Problem of Attack and Defence

To meet this uncertain, unknown, unknowable and yet vital situation the German Commander was forced to divide the 5th Turkish Army into three equal parts, each containing about 20,000 men and 50 guns. Whichever part was first attacked must hold out for two or three days against superior numbers until help could come. To minimize this perilous interval the communications between the three parts had been, as we have seen, improved as far as possible. Roads had been made and boats and shipping accumulated at

suitable points in the Straits. Nevertheless the fact remained that Liman von Sanders must resign himself to meet in the first instance the whole of the Allied Army with one-third of his own already equal forces, and nearly three days must elapse after battle was thus joined before any substantial Turkish reinforcements could arrive.

In fact, however, the British Commander had fewer alternatives open to him than those which Liman von Sanders was bound to take into account. Sir Ian Hamilton was under injunctions from Lord Kitchener not to involve his army in an extensive campaign in Asia, for which he had neither the numbers nor the land transport. The resources of the Navy in small craft were judged not to be sufficient at this time to maintain a large army landed at Enos, sixty or seventy miles from its base at Mudros, to assault Bulair. Thus there remained in practice

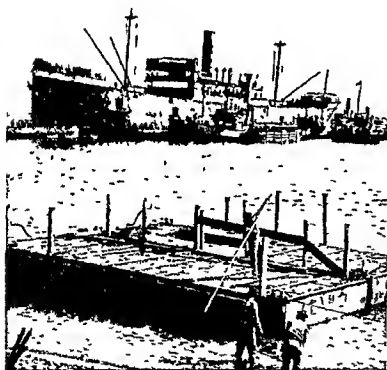


Photo After

A MODERN HORSE OF TROY

Not many miles from the site of ancient Troy the British Army, for their landing at Gallipoli repeated the famous stratagem of the wooden horse. On April 25, 1915, the *River Clyde* a steam collier of some 3913 tons her holds packed with men of the Munsters, Dublins and Hampshires, approached V Beach. At the appointed hour as described in the text, this seemingly innocent vessel became the jumping off place for hundreds of determined men many of whom were to die before the shelter of the cliffs could be reached. It is perhaps, to be regretted that after the war, this historic vessel was sold to a foreign power for £21,500.



Photo Underwood & Underwood

THE LANDING ANOTHER METHOD

The troops on board the *River Clyde* had the advantage of protection from rifle fire until they were close inshore but at the other beaches the troops went ashore in tugs of open boats. As the boats approached the shore the men on board suffered severely, being exposed to a raking fire from the Turkish trenches.

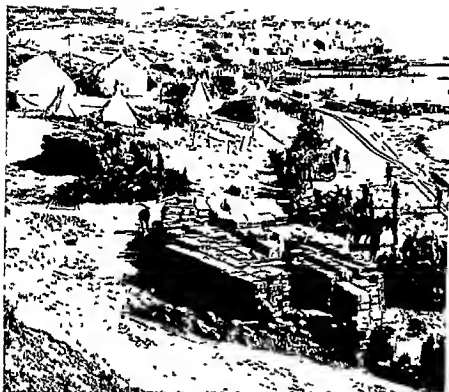
only the southern end of the Peninsula open to the Allied attack. But as von Sanders could not know this, he must still continue to provide against all three contingencies.

A Grimly Balanced Trial of Strength

The issue, therefore, on the eve of battle narrowed itself down to a three days struggle between the whole Anglo-French forces available, or whatever more these Governments had chosen to make available, and the 20,000 Turks who with

their 50 guns were occupying the southern end of the Gallipoli Peninsula. To get ashore and crush or wear down these 20,000 men and to seize the decisive positions they guarded near the Narrows, was the task of Sir Ian Hamilton, and for this purpose he had in his hand about 60,000 men and whatever support might be derived from the enormous gun power of the Fleet. It was a grimly balanced trial of strength for life and death.

The first incalculable hazard was the



"W" BEACH • CAPE HELLES

Photo Taylor

No sooner had the British forces advanced beyond the beach and made good the landing places than the most suitable of these points were quickly converted into advanced bases. The shore at Cape Helles, or Lancashire Landing, was speedily covered with dumps of stores of all kinds, which were replenished as fast as ships and lighters could unload. This beach was continually harassed by gunfire from the Asiatic shore.

landing under fire. This might well fail altogether. It was not inconceivable that most of the troops might be shot in the boats before they even reached the shore. No one could tell. But if the landing were successful, the next peril fell upon the Turks: they had for at least three days to try to hold out against superior forces. How superior no Turk could tell. It had rested entirely with Lord Kitchener how many men he would employ. If, however, the British and French forces were too few and the Turkish defence was maintained for three days, then

execution at the outset were therefore the essential of any sound plan.

* * * *

The Twenty-fifth of April

At daybreak on April 25 Sir Ian Hamilton began his descent upon the Gallipoli Peninsula. The story of the Battle of the Beaches has been often told and will be often told again. From the sombre background of the Great War with its inexhaustible sacrifices and universal carnage this conflict stands forth in vivid outline. The unique character of the operations, the extra-

the balance of advantage would turn against the Allies. After the third or fourth day the attackers would have expended their priceless treasure of surprise. Their choice would be disclosed and they would be committed almost irrevocably to it. Large reinforcements would reach the Turks, strong entrenchments would be completed, and ultimately the invaders would have to meet the main forces of Turkey which could gradually be brought against them from all parts of the Ottoman Empire. Rapidity and intensity of

ordinary amphibious spectacle, the degree of swiftly fatal hazard to which both armies were simultaneously exposed, the supreme issues at stake, the intensely fierce resolve of the soldiers—Christian and Moslem alike—to gain a victory the consequences of which were comprehended in every rank—all constitute an episode which history will long discern. It would not be fitting here to recount the feats of arms which signalized the day. To do them justice a whole volume would be required. Each beach deserves a chapter, each battalion, a page. Only the principal features and their consequences can here be traced.

Sir Ian Hamilton's plan comprised two main converging attacks on the southern end of the Peninsula: the first by the 29th Division at five separate simultaneous landings in the vicinity of Cape Helles, the second by the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps near Gaba Tepe opposite Mardos. Both these

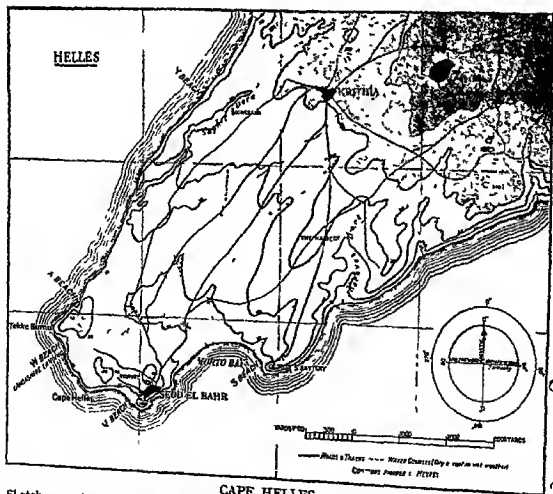
attacks would have become related in the event of either making substantial progress, and both drew upon the resources of the two Turkish divisions which alone were available at this end of the Peninsula. In addition the French were to make a landing on the Asiatic shore near the ruins of Troy to effect a temporary diversion, and the Royal Naval Division in transports accompanied by warships pretended to be about to land at Bulair.

* * * *

At the Turkish Headquarters

Luman von Sanders has described the emotions at the Turkish Headquarters in the town of Gallipoli when in the early morning the news of the invasion arrived.

"It was evident from the white faces of the reporting officers at this early hour that, although a hostile landing had been fully expected, its occurrence



Sketch map of the Cape Helles section of the Peninsula, showing the beaches where the landings took place, the rising ground to the village of Krithia and the peak of Achi Baba. The position of each beach is indicated by its distinguishing letter. The Anzac and Suvla Bay areas will be shown on a map given on page 723.

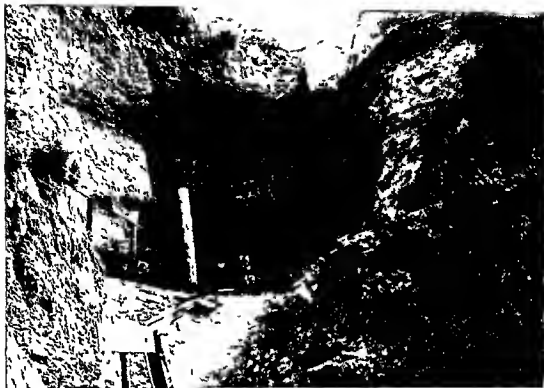


Photo Imperial War Museum

A NATURAL SPRING ON GALLIPOLI

One of the greatest problems of the Gallipoli campaign was the scarcity of pure drinking water. Springs were not uncommon, but the water from many of them was polluted and unfit for consumption. A notable exception was the famous Romano's Well situated behind the lines of the Royal Naval Division.



Photo Imperial War Museum

60-PDR BATTERY IN ACTION

If the Turks were not too plentifully supplied with ammunition the artillery support on the Allied side was quite inadequate. Apart from the naval guns the measure of support which the infantry could rely upon in attack was pitifully weak. Little more, in fact, than a raiding party in France in 1918 would have expected as a matter of course. Of the valuable 60 pdr guns only eight were in action up to July, 1915, and by the beginning of August all but one had broken down.

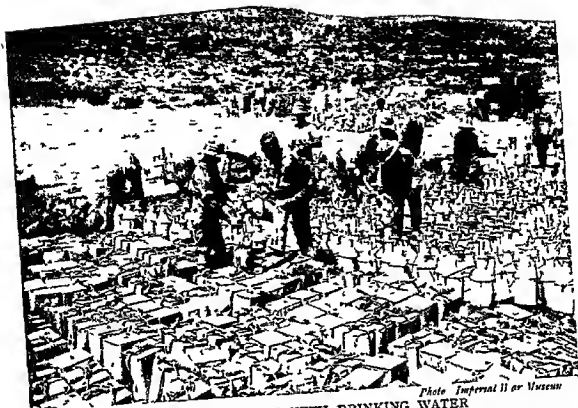


Photo Imperial War Museum

FILLING PETROL TINS WITH DRINKING WATER

In order to augment the water supply thousands of petrol tins and other containers were collected in Egypt and shipped to Gallipoli. These were filled on the beaches from tanks which in their turn were replenished from water transported by sea in lighters and tankers. Petrol tins were carried to the forward areas by means of pack animals.



Photo Imperial War Museum

MANUFACTURERS OF "TICKLER'S ARTILLERY"

One of the greatest needs in a campaign in which the opposing trenches were often but a few yards apart was a plentiful supply of bombs. The celebrated Mills bomb was not available on Gallipoli during the summer of 1915, but tins of Tickler's Plum and Apple Jam were plentiful. Here empty jam tins are being filled with explosives, detonator and fuse the mixture being surrounded by a layer of shrapnel bullets, pieces of barbed wire and other morsels of scrap metal. This device, when carefully handled, met a much felt want. Bombs of this type were first issued about an hour before the battle of June 4, 1915.

at so many places at once had surprised most of them and filled them with apprehension

"My first feeling," he adds with some complacency (for he was completely deceived as to which were the true and which the feint attacks), "was that there was nothing to alter in our dispositions. The enemy had selected for landing those places which we ourselves had considered would be the most probable and had defended with especial care." He proceeded forthwith to where he considered the greatest danger lay. "Personally I had to remain for the present at Bulair, since it was of the utmost importance that the Peninsula should be kept open at that place." Thither he also ordered immediately the 7th Division encamped near the town of Gallipoli.

All day long, in spite of the news that reached him of the desperate struggle proceeding at the other end of the Peninsula, he held this Division and the 5th intact close to the Bulair lines. It was only in the evening that he convinced himself that the ships and transports gathered in the Bay of Xeros were intended as a feint, and even then he dared only to dispatch by water five battalions from this vital spot to the aid of his hard-pressed forces beyond Maidos. Not until the morning of the 26th, twenty-four hours after the landings had begun, could he bring himself to order the remainder of the 5th and 7th Divisions to begin their voyage from Bulair to Maidos, where they could not arrive before the 27th. Thus in his own words, "the upper part of the Gulf of Xeros was almost completely denuded of Turkish troops," and finally only "a depot Pioneer Company and some Labour battalions" occupied empty tents along the ridge.

"The removal of all the troops from the coast of the upper part of the Gulf of Xeros," he writes, "was a serious and responsible decision on my part in the circumstances, but it had to be risked in view of the great superiority of the enemy in the southern part of the Peninsula. Had the British noted this weakness they might well have made great use of it."

Nothing more clearly reveals the vital character of the Turkish communications across the Isthmus of Bulair than the solicitude for them manifested at this juncture by this highly competent soldier. It is well to ponder in the light of this fact upon Lord Kitchener's observation, "Once the Fleet has passed the Straits the position on the Gallipoli Peninsula ceases to be of importance."

* * * *

"V" Beach

We must return to the Battle of the Beaches¹. Of the five landings in the neighbourhood of Cape Helles that of the 88th Brigade on "V" Beach close to the ruined fort of Sedd-el-Bahr was intended to be the most important. Over two thousand men of the Dublin and Munster Fusiliers and of the Hampshire Regiment packed in the hold of the *River Clyde*, a steamer specially prepared for landing troops, were carried to within a few yards of the shore. It had been planned to bridge the intervening water space by two lighters or barges. Along this causeway the troops were to rush company by company on to the beach. At the same time the rest of the Dublin Fusiliers approached the shore in boats. There were scarcely more than four or five hundred Turks to oppose this assault, but these were skilfully concealed in the cliffs and ruined buildings reinforced by a good many machine guns and protected by mines and wire both in the water and ashore.

As the Irish troops rushed from the hold of the *River Clyde*, or as the boats reached the submerged barbed wire, an annihilating fire burst upon them from all parts of the small amphitheatre. The boats were checked by the wire or by the destruction of their rowers. The lighters, swayed by the current, were with difficulty placed and kept in position. In a few minutes more than half of those who had exposed themselves were shot down. The boats, the lighters, the gangways, the water, and the edge of the beach were heaped or crowded with dead and dying. Nevertheless the survivors struggled forward through the

¹ The map on page 535 is relevant

wire and through the sea, some few reaching the beach, while successive platoons of Dublin and Munster Fusiliers continued to leap from the hold of the *River Clyde* into the shambles without the slightest hesitation until restrained by superior authority.

Commander Unwin and the small naval staff responsible for fixing the lighters, and indeed for the plan of using the *River Clyde*, persevered in their endeavours to secure their lighters and lay down gangways unremittingly in the deadly storm, while others struggled with unsurpassed heroism to save the drowning and dying or to make their way armed to the shore. The scenes were enacted once again which Napier has immortalized in the breaches of Badajoz. Nothing availed. The whole landing encountered a bloody arrest. The survivors lay prone under the lip of the beach, and but for the fire of the machine guns of Commander Wedgwood's armoured car squadron which had been mounted in the bows of the *River Clyde*, would probably have been exterminated. The Brigadier, General Napier, being killed, the whole attempt to land at this point was suspended until dark.

"W" Beach

Fighting scarcely less terrible had taken place at "W" Beach. Here the Lancashire Fusiliers, after a heavy bombardment from the Fleet, were towed and rowed to the shore in thirty or forty cutters. Again the Turks reserved their fire till the moment when the leading boats touched the beach. Again its effects were devastating. Undeterred by the most severe losses from rifle and machine-gun fire, from sea mines and land mines, this magnificent battalion waded through the water, struggled through the wire, and with marvellous discipline actually re-formed. From this position they were quite unable to advance, and this attack also would have been arrested, but for a fortunate accident.

The boats containing the company on the left had veered away towards some rocks beneath the pro-

montory of Cape Tekke. Here the soldiers landed with little loss, and climbing the cliffs fell upon the Turkish machine guns which were sweeping the beach and bayoneted their gunners. Profiting by this relief, the remainder of the battalion already on the beach managed to make their way to the shelter of the cliffs, and climbing them established themselves firmly on their summit. Here at about nine o'clock they were reinforced by the Worcesters, and gradually from this direction the foothold won was steadily extended during the day.

"X" Beach

Still farther to the left the Royal Fusiliers had landed at "X" Beach, admirably supported at the closest ranges by the *Implacable* (Captain H. C. Lockyer). They were followed by the Inniskillings and the Border Regiment, and by fierce fighting and a resolute charge carried the high ground above Cape Tekke, thus establishing connection with the troops from "W" Beach.

A mile to the left of "X" Beach again, two battalions of Marines were landed without a single casualty at "Y". These were attacked at nightfall, and early the next morning signalled for boats and re-embarked. They, however, drew to their neighbourhood important Turkish forces, and thus for a time aided the other attacks. At the other end of the line, at "S" Beach, on the extreme right near the old fort called De Totts Battery, another battalion was easily landed and maintained an isolated position. When darkness fell, the remaining troops in the *River Clyde* managed to get ashore without further loss, and gradually secured possession of the edge of "V" Beach and some broken ground on either side of it. Thus when the day ended lodgments had been effected from all the five beaches attacked, and about 9,000 men had been put on shore. Of these at least 3,000 were killed or wounded, and the remainder were clinging precariously to their dear-bought footholds and around the rim of the Peninsula. We must now turn to the second main attack.

* * *

As the flotilla approached the shore a scattered fire from the Turkish pickets rang out, but the Australians leaping from the boats into the water or on to the beach scrambled up the cliffs and rocks, driving the Turks before them in the dim hut growing light of dawn. The destroyers were close at hand with another 2,500 men, and in scarcely half an hour upwards of 4,000 men had been landed. The skirmish developing constantly into an action rolled inland towards the sunrise, and by daylight considerable progress had been made. By half-past seven, 8,000 men in all had been landed. In spite of rifle and artillery fire which steadily increased against the beach, by two o'clock the whole infantry of the leading Australian Division, 12,000 strong, and two batteries of Indian mountain artillery, were ashore occupying a semi-circular position of considerable extent. The 2nd Division including a New Zealand brigade followed, and within a period of twenty-four hours in all 20,000 men and a small proportion of artillery were effectively landed.

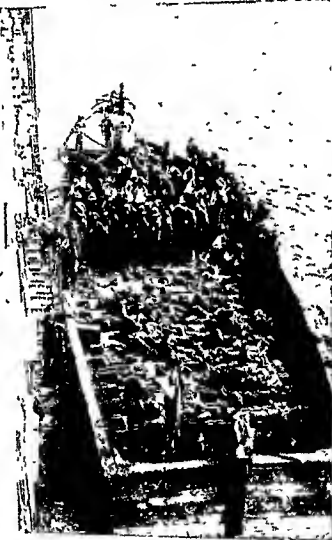
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Mustapha Kemal

The two Turkish divisions who were left without help of any sort to face the onslaught of the Allied Army were shrewdly disposed. Nine battalions of the 9th Division guarded the likely landing-places around the coast from Gaba Tepe to Morto Bay, the remaining three battalions of that Division and the nine

battalions forming the 19th Division were all held concentrated in reserve near Maudos.

At the head of the 19th Division there stood in this strange story a Man of Destiny. Mustapha Kemal Bey had on April 24 ordered his best regiment, the 57th, a field exercise for the next morning in the direction of the high mountain of Sari Bair (Hill 971) and, as Fate would have it, these three battalions stood drawn up on parade when at 5.30 a.m. the news of the first landings came in. A later message reported that about one British



THE PRICE OF EMPIRE

Photo L. S. A.

After a battle on Gallipoli one of the most difficult problems was the evacuation of the wounded. When it is realised that most of the area behind the Allied line was shell swept it must be admitted that the organization for dealing with casualties was one of the most satisfactory features of the campaign. Here a barge filled with stretcher cases and walking wounded is tied-up alongside a hospital ship. Within a few hours of the action most of the casualties will be as comfortable as men in their case can be.

battalion had landed near Ari Burnu and were marching upon Sari Bair

Both Sami Pasha, who commanded at the southern end of the Peninsula, and Sanders himself regarded the landing at Ari Burnu as a feint, and Mustapha Kemal was ordered merely to detach a single battalion to deal with it. But this General instantly divined the power and peril of the attack. On his own authority he at once ordered the whole 57th Regiment, accompanied by a battery of artillery, to march to meet it. He himself on foot, map in hand, set off across country at the head of the leading company. The distance was not great, and in an hour he met the Turkish covering forces falling back before the impetuous Australian advance. He at once ordered his leading battalion to deploy and attack, and himself personally planted his mountain battery in position. Forthwith—again without seeking higher authority—he ordered his 77th Regiment to the scene. By ten o'clock, when the Turkish Commander-in-Chief

galloped on to the field, practically the whole of the reserves in the southern part of the Peninsula had been drawn into the battle, and ten battalions and all the available artillery were in violent action against the Australians.¹

A Bitter Struggle

Bitter and confused was the struggle which followed. The long-limbed athletic Anzacs thrust inland in all directions with fierce ardour as they had sprung pell-mell ashore from the boats, intent on seizing every inch of ground that they could. They now came in contact with extremely well-handled and bravely led troops and momentarily increasing artillery fire. In the deep gulleys, among the rocks and scrub, many small bloody fights were fought to the end. Quarter was neither asked nor given, parties of Australians cut off were killed to the last man, no

¹ This episode is well described in the Australian Official History.



Photo Record Press

THE ROLL CALL

In 1874 Lady Butler's picture, 'The Roll Call' was exhibited at the Royal Academy. Familiar to most people, the picture shows General Higginson riding down a line of Guards, the survivors of a battle in the Crimea. Here a thin line of the brave Australasian troops are answering to their names after the first landing at Anzac.



Photo Imperial War Museum

CAMOUFLAGE A TURKISH SNIPER

In the early days of the Gallipoli campaign sniping was carried out by both sides with enterprise and vigour. More than one Turk was captured, cleverly camouflaged to resemble scrub or a tree. This photograph taken at Anzac shows a Turkish sniper shortly after capture. He is covered with foliage attached to his clothing and must have been difficult to locate.

prisoners wounded or unwounded were taken by the Turks

Meanwhile on both sides reinforcements were being hurried into the swaying and irregular firing line. All through the day and all through the night the battle continued with increasing fury. In the actual fighting lines on both sides more than half the men engaged were killed or wounded. So critical did the position appear at midnight on the 25th, and so great was the confusion behind the firing line, that General Burdwood and the Australian Brigadiers advised immediate re-embarkation, observing that decision must be taken then or never. But at this juncture the Commander-in-Chief showed himself a truer judge of the spirit of the Australian troops than even their own most trusted leaders. Steady counsel being also given by Admiral Thursby, Sir Ian Hamilton wrote

a definite order to "Dig in and stick it out." From that moment through all the months that followed the power did not exist in the Turkish Empire to shake from its soil the grip of the Antipodes.

* * * *

April 26 at Helles

All through the night of April 26 the position at "V" Beach continued critical. The landing-place was still exposed to Turkish rifle fire, and a further advance was imperative if any results were to be achieved. Accordingly at dawn on the 26th, preceded by a heavy bombardment from the Fleet, the remnants of the Dublin and Munster Fusiliers and of the Hampshire Regiment were ordered to assault the castle and village of Sedd-el-Bahr. Undaunted by their losses and experiences, unexhausted



Photo Imperial War Museum

A MESSAGE FROM ASIATIC ANNIE

A photograph taken on the beach road leading from Cape Helles to Gully Ravine. Men are seen resting under shelter of the cliff, and a shell which has travelled from the Asiatic shore across the Straits and the southernmost point of the Peninsula is bursting in the sea. Asiatic Annie, as the guns on the Asiatic side were collectively named, caused considerable embarrassment to working parties on the beaches, as they were able to enfilade Lancashire Landing as well as the rest-camps further inland.

by twenty-four hours of continuous fighting, these heroic troops responded to the call. By nine o'clock they had stormed the castle, and after three hours' house-to-house fighting made themselves masters of the village. A Turkish redoubt strongly held by the enemy lay beyond. The wasted battalions paused before this new exertion, and the redoubt was subjected to a violent and prolonged bombardment by the battleship *Albatross*. When the cannonade ceased the English and Irish soldiers mingled together, animated by a common resolve, issued forth from the shattered houses of Sedd-el-Bahr, and in broad daylight by main force and with cruel sacrifice stormed the redoubt and slew its stubborn defenders.

The prolonged, renewed, and seemingly inexhaustible efforts of the survivors of these three battalions, their persistency, their will-power, their physical endurance, achieved a feat of arms certainly in these respects not often, if ever surpassed in the history of either island race. The reorganization of the troops at the water's edge, the preparation and inspiration of these successive assaults, are linked with the memory of a brave staff officer, Colonel Doughty-Wylie, who was killed like Wolfe in the moment of victory, and whose name was given by the Army to the captured fort by which he lies

Exhaustion on Both Sides

As the result of these successes and of the continued pressure of the British attack from its various lodgments on the enemy, a continuous arc was esta-



Photo Imperial War Museum

THE PERISCOPE AND THE SNIPERSCOPE

So accurate was the marksmanship of the opposing forces on Gallipoli that many were the devices brought into use to keep down casualties. One of the most ingenious was the superscope which, constructed on the principles of the periscope, enabled a sniper to pick out his target without exposing himself to the enemy.

lished by the evening of the 26th along the whole coast from "V," "W" and "X" Beaches, and a junction was effected with the single battalion landed at "S." Profiting by the exhaustion, heavy losses and inferior numbers of the Turks, and reinforced by four French battalions, the Allies on the 27th converted this concave arc by a further advance into a line from a point about two miles north of Cape Tekke to De Totts Battery. The extreme tip of the Gallipoli Peninsula had thus been bitten off, all the beaches were protected from rifle fire, and a substantial foothold had been established and consolidated upon land.

The rest of the 29th Division, the Royal Naval Division, and the French Division having landed during the 26th and 27th, Sir Ian Hamilton ordered on

the 28th a general advance from the tip of the Peninsula towards Krithia Village. Although the Turks were beginning to receive reinforcements and had re-organized, they considered this a very critical day. The troops which had opposed the landing had lost heavily. Their battalions were reduced to about 500 strong. By midday the whole of the Turkish reserves were engaged. The British and French, however, were not strong enough to make headway against the Turkish rifle fire. Once inland in the spoon-shaped dip the ships' guns could not help them much, and they had not had time to develop their own artillery support.

Absence of British Reserves

By the evening of the 28th, therefore, a complete equipoise was reached. If, during the 28th and 29th, two or three fresh divisions of French, British, or Indian troops could have been thrown in, the Turkish defence must have been broken and the decisive positions would have fallen into our hands. And all the time the lines of Bulair lay vacant, naked, unguarded—the spoil of any fresh force which could now be landed from the sea. Where was the extra Army Corps that was needed? It existed. It was destined for the struggle. It was doomed to suffer fearful losses in that struggle. But now when its presence would have given certain victory, it stood idle in Egypt or England.

The next move lay with the Turks. Reinforcements were steadily and rapidly approaching the hard-pressed two Divisions. The leading regiments of the Divisions from Bulair were already arriving at intervals. The 15th Division was coming by sea from Constantinople to Kihia Liman. The 11th Division was crossing from the Asiatic shore. In this situation the 29th and 30th passed away without event.

* * * *

Appeal to Lord Kitchener for Reinforcements

On the morning of the 27th we received at the Admiralty a telegram from

Admiral de Robeck giving an account of the battle.

I took this across at once myself to Lord Kitchener. As soon as he saw that 29,000 men had been landed, he expressed the most lively satisfaction. He seemed to think that the critical moment had passed, and that once the troops had got ashore in large numbers the rest would follow swiftly. But the news of the heavy losses that came in on the 28th, and the further telegrams which were received, showed the great severity and critical nature of the fighting. On this day, therefore, Lord Fisher and I repaired together to the War Office and jointly appealed to Lord Kitchener to send Sir Ian Hamilton large reinforcements from the troops in Egypt and to place other troops in England under orders to sail. Fisher pleaded eloquently and fiercely and I did my best. Lord Kitchener was at first incredulous that more troops could be needed, but our evident anxiety and alarm shook him. That evening he telegraphed to Sir John Maxwell and to Sir Ian Hamilton assigning an Indian Brigade and the 42nd Territorial Division then in Egypt to the Dardanelles.

There was no reason whatever why these forces and others should not have been made available as a reserve to Sir Ian Hamilton before his attack was launched, in which case the preparations for bringing them to the Peninsula would have been perfected simultaneously with those of the attack, and the transports could have carried them to the Peninsula the moment the beaches were ready for their reception. These reinforcements aggregating 12,000 or 13,000 rifles could have fought in the battle of the 28th or enabled it to be renewed at dawn on the 29th. In fact, however, the Indian Infantry Brigade did not land until May 1 and the leading brigade of the 42nd Division did not disembark until May 5.

The Turkish Counter-attack Repulsed

Meanwhile reinforcements from all quarters and artillery taken from the defences of the Straits were steadily reaching the Turks. By May 1 the local German Commander, Sodenstern,

thought himself strong enough to begin a general counter-attack, and during the whole of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, he continued to thrust in his troops, wearied as they were either by march or battle, in a series of desperate and disconnected attempts to drive the Allies into the sea. But if Sir Ian Hamilton's army was not strong enough to advance itself, neither could it be shaken from its positions. By May 3 the Turkish attacks had broken down completely with very heavy loss. The first wave of Turkish reinforcements had spent itself, and it was again the turn of the Allies. The organization of the Beaches had been established, supplies, artillery and ammunition had been landed in considerable quantities. There was nothing to prevent a renewed general advance on the 4th or 5th against the discouraged Turks, had additional troops proportionate to the new situation been available. As it was the attack could not be begun until the 6th, and so short of troops was Sir Ian Hamilton that he found it necessary to withdraw the 2nd Australian Brigade and the New Zealand Brigade from the Anzac area to Helles.

The new battle commenced on the morning of the 6th and was continued on the 7th and 8th. It was sustained by nearly 50,000 British and French troops with 72 guns, against which the Turks mustered approximately 30,000 men with 56 guns. The result was a great and bitter disappointment for the Allies. Only a few hundred yards were gained along the whole front. The losses both of the British and French had been very heavy. In all from the 25th to the cessation of the attack on the evening of the 8th, the British had lost nearly 15,000 killed and wounded and the French at least 4,000.

A Grim Situation

The situation disclosed on the morrow

of this battle was grim. Sir Ian Hamilton's whole army was cramped and pinned down at two separate points on the Gallipoli Peninsula. His two main attacks, though joined by the sea, were now otherwise quite disconnected with each other. None of the decisive positions on the Peninsula were in our hands. A continuous line of Turkish entrenchments stood between the British and Achi Baba, and between the Australians and the mountain of Sari Bair or the town of Maidos. These entrenchments were growing and developing line upon line.

The French having been withdrawn from Troy, the Turkish troops in Asia were free to reinforce the Peninsula. All the available British reserves, including the Indian Brigade and the 42nd Division, had been thrown in and largely consumed after their opportunity had passed. The casualties in every battalion had been serious, and there was no means at hand of filling the gaps. Not even the regular 10 per cent reserve which follows automatically every division sent on active service had been provided for the 29th Division.

On the 9th Sir Ian Hamilton reported that it was impossible to break through the Turkish lines with the forces at his disposal, that conditions of trench warfare had supervened, and that reinforcements of at least an Army Corps were needed. At least a month must intervene before the drafts needed to restore the Divisions already engaged and the large new forces plainly required could be obtained from home. What would happen in this month of continued wastage in the Allied Army and of unceasing growth in the Turkish power? Initiative and Opportunity had passed to the enemy. A long, costly struggle lay before us and far greater efforts would now certainly be required.

CHAPTER XLVII

BEYOND THE DARDANELLES

Falkenhayn's Doctrine—The New German Striking Force—The Dardanelles Attacked—Reactions of the Dardanelles—The Pressures on Falkenhayn—The Point of Attack—The Crown Prince—The Assembly of the Eleventh Army—H's Part—The Niemen Army—On the Eve of the Attack—Gorlice The Bombardment

FALKENHAYN was a convinced and inveterate "Westerner." He believed that any great offensive against Russia would evaporate in the immense indefinite regions and measureless recesses to which the Russian armies could retire. Constantly before his mind's eye rose the warning pictures of the fate of Napoleon's Grand Army in the invasion of 1812.

Falkenhayn's Doctrine

He did not choose to remember that Napoleon had no railways which could continually nourish large armies 1,000 or 2,000 miles from their home-base, and provide them with shelter from the winter and well-stocked depôts at every stage of their advance. All his heart was in the war in France and Flanders. There alone, in his view, could the supreme struggle be decided. There, was the proper and official theatre of war. There alone, could orthodox military principles receive their satisfaction. These strong professional views he shared with his leading opponents, with Joffre, with French, and after French with Haig. "Better," he might almost have exclaimed, "he defeated in adhering to sound military doctrine, than conquer by 'irregular' methods."

However, as we have seen, the power and fame of Hindenburg, reinforced by the obtrusive influence of the politicians, had overruled his better judgment, forced him to smother the purity of his creed, and make submission to "the evil thing." The four corps which he had longed to hurl into a new offensive

in the west had been wrested from him. They had marched and fought in the Winter Battle, gaining new cheap laurels for his dangerous rivals, but producing as he had predicted no decisive strategic result. What was to be done? He must call a new army into being to replace the legions torn from his command.

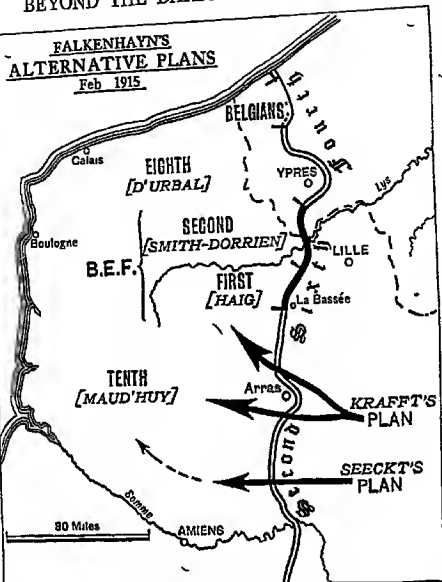
The New German Striking Force

On February 22 he confabulated with Colonel von Wrisberg, the head of the organizing department of the Ministry of War, upon the creation of a new reserve. New nine-battalion divisions were to be formed by taking three battalions from each of the divisions on the Western Front, and by reducing the number of guns in the batteries from six to four, and so on. The weakened divisions were each to be compensated with 2,400 trained recruits and additional machine-guns.

This transformation was expected to take from six to eight weeks, and when completed Falkenhayn hoped to have at his disposal a free striking force of twenty-four new divisions. Actually from lack of equipment and other causes he had to content himself with fourteen, fit for service at the beginning of April. Upon these fourteen he was already building his plans. They should be formed into an Eleventh Army with the highly competent Colonel von Seeckt, afterwards better known as its Chief of Staff, under some figurehead.

Early in March he set Seeckt, Krafft, Kuhl and Tappen to find the

best place in the Anglo-French line for striking the longed-for blow. They made profound studies, replete with details and time-plans, of the requisite number of divisions and guns. Seeckt selected that same front from Arras to the Somme which Ludendorff from 50 miles further back was to attack in 1918. Hohenborn, the War Minister, concurred in this, holding that "it was the northern wing of the enemy front in the first place [i.e. the British forces] which should be broken and crushed." The right flank of the British then near La Bassée was to be assailed, and they were to be pushed north-west towards Boulogne and Calais, while a left-handed stroke swept the French to the southward. All these plans so busily prepared came to naught. Once again the east prevailed, but this time it was not the influence of H.L., but the force of events which plunged Falkenhayn into a new desertion of his favourite theories.



FALKENHAYN'S ALTERNATIVE PLANS, FEBRUARY, 1915

General von Falkenhayn in common with Joffre and French was a staunch believer in the importance of the Western Front. In his view the spectacular adventures of H.L. against the Russians were unlikely to affect the issue so he cast about for the troops necessary to resume operations against the Allied line in the west. By a scheme of reorganization described in the text a new force was assembled and a plan for its employment prepared by Colonel von Seeckt. The direction of Seeckt's proposed offensive is outlined in the sketch map given above. It was to take the form of a drive between Arras and the Somme, with the object of thrusting back the right flank of the British north-west towards Boulogne and Calais while a left-handed stroke swept the French to the southward. As will be shown this plan was destined to come to naught.

The Dardanelles Attacked

On February 18 a numerous and powerful British fleet, supported by a French squadron, opened fire upon the outer forts of the Dardanelles¹. The two seaward forts of the Gallipoli Peninsula were much damaged and their guns were destroyed the next day by landing parties from the ships.

¹ An event that has already figured in this narrative, but is here briefly recounted in order to demonstrate one of the important repercussions of the attack upon the Dardanelles.

As each successive day deliberate and methodical long-range bombardments accompanied by sweeping operations took place, it became evident that a serious attempt was to be made to force the Dardanelles. If this should succeed, Constantinople, with the only Turkish magazines and arsenals, would fall into the power of the victors, and the best that could be hoped for was that the Young Turk leaders would evacuate European Turkey, and continue the struggle as a purely Asiatic power. Thus the only ally the Teutonic Empires had gained would be irretrievably broken. Even more serious would be the political consequences. The spoils of the Turkish Empire would be at the disposal of the Allies. They could offer to Italy, Greece, and Roumania, all three already trembling on the verge of joining them, ample and highly-coveted rewards. They could act upon Bulgaria both by the threat of isolation amid a hostile Balkan Peninsula, and by potent bribes.

Reactions of the Dardanelles

The reactions of the British thrust at Constantinople were immediately apparent upon all these four States. The demands of Italy and her preparations developed apace. Greece, torn between King Constantine and Venizelos, was apparently ready to supply an army to attack the Gallipoli Peninsula. King Ferdinand talked about joining the Allies, and refused to receive General von der Goltz in audience. Roumania froze into silence. Falkenhayn was forced to face the prospect of a complete adverse Balkan block which had everything to gain from the ruin of the Turkish and Austro-Hungarian Empires.

But all these direct impending consequences were in their turn dwarfed by the effect on Russia of full intimate contact with England and France, should the British Navy achieve the entry and command of the Black Sea. Russian troops would then flow freely southwards to animate the Balkan confederacy. British and French munitions with the world markets and the oceans behind them would revive and multiply the Russian armies.

How to stop it? There were the strong defences of the Dardanelles, the forts, the mobile armaments, the minefields, the adverse current, the great hazards of the adventure! It was a long-respected maxim that ships could not fight forts. But supposing the ships had guns which could destroy the forts and the forts had no guns which could reach the ships while so engaged, such a theory would evidently require modification. But worse lay behind. The power of the fortress cannon against the British Fleet was severely measured by their supplies of armour-piercing shells. When these were exhausted, the forts had spoken their last word, and the advancing Fleets would sweep the minefields, no doubt with loss, but also with certainty.

Falkenhayn learned with distaste that the forts were ill-supplied with heavy ammunition and particularly with armour-piercing shells, and that no reserve of mines existed. On March 10 Admiral von Usedom, the German officer who had been appointed to command the water defences of the Straits, telegraphed: "Despite the relatively small success of the enemy, the overwhelming of all the Dardanelles works cannot be prevented indefinitely, unless the munitions and mines now on order for months arrive soon, or the defence is sustained by submarines from home waters."

It could not take less than two months for submarines despatched from Kiel to make the perilous voyage. As for the shells and mines, how were they to reach the scene? Serbia was unconquered. Roumania, though professing friendship, was unwilling to transport munitions. In fact, although officers in plain clothes could travel to and fro across the neutral barrier, no munitions were allowed to pass from Germany to Turkey for nearly eight months. But who could tell what might happen in six weeks?

All these pressures developed upon the high strategic mind of Germany during February, March and April. On March 18 the hostile fleet made what appeared to be a resolute attempt to force the

passage of the Straits. The great ships engaged the forts with vigour, and beat their gunfire down. The sweepers advanced towards the vital irreplaceable barrier of mines. However, luckily for O H L¹ the last spare handful of mines had been laid parallel to the course of the Fleet in an area which it had believed was swept, and two or three ships were sunk, one French ship with heavy loss of life. The British Fleet, having itself suffered a loss of some forty lives, then withdrew, apparently baffled, from the contest, and the intelligence reports informed Berlin that a considerable army was collecting in Egypt for a land attack on the Gallipoli Peninsula in concert with a renewed attack by the Fleet.

On the other hand, it was stated that as the Russians had now laid claim to Constantinople, the British were no longer in earnest about forcing the Dardanelles. As to the land attack, the Turks, who had now crowded into the Gallipoli Peninsula and were under the command of General Luman von Sanders, professed confidence. But the difficulty about stopping the Fleet consisted in the fact that the mine-fields could not be renewed if damaged in any way, and that there were less than fifty large armour-piercing shells for all the decisive guns of the forts together.

The Pressures on Falkenhayn

We can see these two opposing sets of circumstances maturing simultaneously in Falkenhayn's mind, the Eleventh Army gathering for use in the west, and this horrible intrusion upon Turkey from the south-east Mediterranean. In the fine brain of the supreme commander the two principles fought for mastery. In the end he decided of his own free will that the most urgent task was to crush Serbia and to open a road for munitions to Constantinople and the Dardanelles. Thus by the beginning of April when the new Eleventh Army was in being, Falkenhayn had already abandoned all his plans to use it in the west, and obeying the dominant strategic compulsion of the British attack on the Dardanelles, had decided to employ it against

¹ Oberste Heeresleitung the German G H Q

Serbia for the salvation of Constantinople and Turkey.

While he was in this mood of concession to the eastern heresy, another wave of pressures caught hold of him. Conrad had been cured by harsh experience of all desire for adventures against Serbia. He was clutching at the crests and passes of the Carpathians. At more than one point the Russian vanguards already overlooked the broad Hungarian plain. One more effort, one more success, and all the floods of Russian manhood would flow ravaging into the home-lands of Hungary. Such an event would rack the Empire to its foundations. Week by week the Russian flood mounted. The Austrian dykes and dams were already breaking. The major strategic values asserted themselves upon the Austrian Headquarters. Who now cared for Serbia, Italy and Roumania? Bulgaria and Turkey seemed relatively meaningless factors. At all costs the Carpathian front must be held.

To all German suggestions of a joint operation against Serbia, Conrad turned a dull ear. Nothing now mattered to him but the hour-to-hour defence of the Eastern Front, and for this he had a plan, a plan which in time, space and direction was the expression of his military genius. Somewhere on the Dunajetz river, say between Gorlice and Tarnow, there must be an efficient German thrust. Austrian troops would not suffice. There must be a German army capable of crashing through the Russian front and thus turning and undermining their whole line of battle along the summits of the Carpathians. Conrad saw that for him all might be regained by a punch with real Germans at this particular and deadly point. This then was what he urged, and to nothing else would he listen.

The Point of Attack.

Falkenhayn had already relinquished his dreams of an offensive against the British in France. He had resigned himself to an eastern campaign to relieve Constantinople. He now somewhat easily acceded to Conrad's demands. He certainly responded professionally

to the strategic charm of his colleague's conception. He saw this was the place to hit. He saw that German troops alone could strike the blow. By this time the dreaded naval attack upon the Dardanelles had unaccountably dwindled and ceased. The danger was constant, but the urgency had abated, and Conrad pointed the path and clamoured for aid to his forces.

So, early in April Falkenhayn having first been drawn against his will to the east, decided to take all chances at the

Dardanelles and succour Conrad. But be said, as generals should always say, "If this is worth doing, it is worth doing well," and he said, what only those in the highest command can say, "We will make a set-piece of it." Four German divisions (which was all that Conrad had dared to ask) would be too few. Four corps might be enough. Conrad should have double what he asked. The new Eleventh German Army should be used between Gorlice and Tarnow.

The Crown Prince

In all this conflict of ideas and pressures, it is interesting to notice the part played by the German Crown Prince. No doubt he had accomplished military advisers, but certainly the tact and diplomacy which he employed deserve attention.

On April 1 the Crown Prince had a long conversation with Falkenhayn. The Heir to the Throne, who had a considerable stake in all that was going forward, began by expounding the paramount importance of the Western Front. He declared his belief that the decision of the war could only be attained in France against the Western Powers, and that this would require the use of all the forces of the German army. In his view "this fundamental idea must hold good during the whole war." Thus he showed himself in the fullest accord with Falkenhayn's doctrine. For the present, however, he added, every attempt to reach a decision in the west now that the Austrian position had attained such importance was premature. The Russians must first of all be struck down and be made to make a separate peace. Falkenhayn's intention was merely to cripple the Russian power for some considerable time, and therefore not to use more forces against them than necessary.

Not thus in the Crown Prince's view would the Germans attain the necessary freedom to enable them to carry out their main task, their final task in the west. Far rather was it necessary to put in such strong forces in the east that a decision might be attained there. Here was the policy of the "Easterners" expressed in the language of the Western



THE EASTERN PLAN, APRIL, 1915

In the thrust to be delivered against the Russian front by the newly assembled Eleventh Army the manœuvre which H. had hitherto consistently adopted against the Russians was abandoned in favour of a frontal assault north-east across the foothills between the Vistula and the mountains. It was intended that when the Russian front was pierced the Eleventh Army should wheel until it faced east and then advance in rear of the Russian armies holding the Carpathians. How the plan developed is shown on the map on page 673.



After the colour sketch by John de G. Bryan

THE FIRST GAS ATTACK LANGEMARCK

April 22 1915 was a glorious spring day. It began quietly on the front east and north east of Ypres but later, in the forenoon, there was considerable shelling. At 5 p.m. Ypres was heavily bombarded and to the north east before Langemarck, from the German trenches opposite the sector held by Algerian troops, a yellowish cloud began to drift slowly towards the Allied line. Presently the French coloured troops coughing and choking were seen to be retiring, and it speedily became obvious that something had happened of an unusual and serious nature.

school. We have quoted Kuhl. If the Crown Prince ever in fact used such arguments—and this is not yet disputed—he certainly wrapped the shrewdest military counsel in the coverings most likely to conciliate Falkenhayn. Falkenhayn was persuaded three-quarters of the way. He would not boldly seek the destruction of Russia and suffer all minor punishment elsewhere, but he agreed to throw his reserves upon the east rather than the west, and he agreed further to throw them against

Russia in the first instance, rather than against Serbia for the relief of Constantinople.

The Assembly of the Eleventh Army

The plan which Conrad had conceived and which Falkenhayn had agreed to implement with doubled forces was a striking departure from the traditional German methods which H.L. had hitherto, with a single exception at Lodz, consistently employed. Instead of a wide enveloping movement directed against

the flanks and rear of the enemy, it was a straightforward frontal attack. There was to be a break-through in the centre, or as the French call it, "*une percée*," similar to those so often extravagantly bid for on the Western Front. The sector between Gorlice and Tarnow was about thirty miles wide. Behind the Austrian line between these two towns the German Eleventh Army began in early April to assemble. It was finally composed of four German Corps drawn from the French front, the Guard from Alsace, the Xth from the west of Rheims, the XLth from Chaumes, and a composite corps from Lorraine. To these were added the Austrian Vth Corps and a Hungarian cavalry division, in all one cavalry and ten infantry divisions about 170,000 men.

The Eleventh Army had 352 field and 146 heavy guns, and the Austrian Fourth Army behind whom they were forming had 350 field and 103 heavy guns—that is to say, a field gun to about every 45 yards and a heavy gun to every 132 yards. Although these proportions were far surpassed by both sides on the Somme in 1916, they represented in May 1915 the greatest artillery concentration yet prepared.

The direction of the Gorlice-Tarnow attack was to be north-east across the foothills between the Vistula and the mountains, and once the Russian line was broken, the Germans would wheel their front until they faced east, thus traversing, as may be seen by the map, the rear of all three Russian armies battling along the Carpathians to the southward. Indeed, to make the operation fruitful in the highest degree, or as Falkenhayn expressed it, to improve the "harvest prospects," he suggested to Conrad that the Austrian armies holding the mountains should "give way step by step drawing the enemy after them" into Hungary. But Conrad ignored the proposal. He could not bring himself to yield Hungarian soil. He had no desire to encourage his armies to retreat. His efforts had usually been required in the opposite sense.

HL's Part

To cover the withdrawal of such im-

portant forces from France "lively activity" was prescribed along the entire Western Front. The gas attack at Ypres—not by shelling as at Bolimov, but by the continuous discharge of gas from cylinders—which began on April 22 was the most formidable of these distractive enterprises. The precipitate exposure of this deadly device at a time when no German reserves were at hand to exploit its surprising effects, was one of the debts which the western allies owed to the Eastern Front. HL were likewise ordered to make a diversion in their northern sphere.

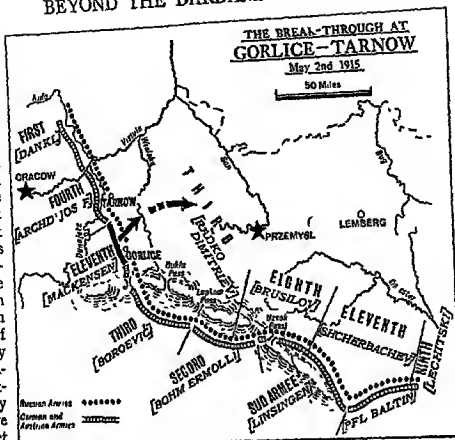
They seem to have viewed the Gorlice-Tarnow project with restrained enthusiasm. They had almost come to regard the Eastern Front as their preserve. The arrival of Falkenhayn and OHL as prime actors in these scenes, furnished with the reinforcements for which HL had long pleaded in vain, could scarcely be welcomed. Moreover HL had only one method—a vast out-flanking movement from the north. To march between Riga and Kovno and then drive southwards far behind the Russian front, cutting the main railways which sustained it, was their ideal conception. For this the forces were lacking. The most they could offer by way of diversion was a powerful raid by three cavalry supported by three infantry divisions into Courland and Lithuania. This operation began at the end of April and no doubt excited Russian concern.

The Niemen Army

Hindenburg's own remarks explain the direction in which his influence was exerted.

"My Headquarters was at first only an indirect participant in the great operation which began at Gorlice. Our first duty, within the framework of this mighty enterprise, was to tie down strong enemy forces. This was done at first by attacks in the great bend of the Vistula west of Warsaw and on the East Prussian frontier in the direction of Kovno, then on a greater scale by a cavalry sweep into Lithuania and Courland which began on April 27. The advance of three cavalry divisions, supported by the same number of

infantry divisions, touched Russia's war zone at a sensitive spot. For the first time the Russians realized that by such an advance their most important railways which connected the Russian armies with the heart of the country could be seriously threatened. They threw in large forces to meet the invasion.



THE BREAK-THROUGH AT GORLICE-TARNOW

The general idea of the attack between Gorlice and Tarnow was Conrad's. He had hoped for German aid and he was not disappointed. Falkenhayn was determined that there should be no mistake, and his new Eleventh Army, accordingly, was as strong as he could make it. It comprised four German corps from the Western Front, an Austrian corps, and a Hungarian cavalry division. This formidable force supported by a weight of artillery greater than anything hitherto assembled at one point, swept through and beyond the Russian lines rendering the Russian Carpathian front untenable and causing the precipitate withdrawal of the Russian armies which but a few weeks before, had constituted so grave a menace to the plains of Hungary.

larger forces there, to retain our hold on the occupied region and keep up our pressure on the enemy in these districts which had hitherto been untouched by war. Thus a new German army gradually came into existence. It was given the name of the "Niemen Army" from the great river of this region."

The Russian forces holding the front against which these dire preparations were progressing, consisted of the Third Army under General Radko Dimitriev, who had hitherto found no difficulty in containing the bulk of the Austrian Fourth Army. The greatest pains were taken to conceal from the Russians the gathering of the storm. All German reconnoitring parties were dressed in Austrian uniforms, and until within a few days of the battle, General Dimitriev was quite unaware of what impended

upon him. Still less did he suspect its scale and intensity. The German Staff Officers climbing the hill-tops could see the Russian positions laid out before them as on a map. There were three lines of loop-holed trenches with overhead cover, constituting a single zone of defence.

The German reconnoitring parties found the conditions very different from those of the Western Front. No man's land was a wide space, three or four thousand yards across, through which occasional patrols wandered by night and in which the inhabitants cultivated their fields by day. The tranquillity of the countryside was broken only by an occasional splutter of rifle-fire or a few desultory shells. The first care of the Germans had been to remove all the inhabitants so that no tales could be told. Meanwhile enormous

dumps of ammunition, 1,200 rounds for every field and 500 to 600 for every heavy battery, were accumulated

On the Eve of the Attack

The delicate question of the command was adjusted in the following manner: the Eleventh Army, Austrian and German troops alike, and their offensive were entrusted to General von Mackensen with Seeckt as his mentor. Mackensen was placed under Conrad and A O K. But these in turn agreed not to give any orders to Mackensen which had not beforehand been approved by Falkenhayn and O H L. And then, lest this procedure should be dilatory, it was understood that in practice O H L would tell Seeckt what to do direct, the formal orders reaching Mackensen as soon as possible through the prescribed ceremonial channel. Thus Austrian dignity was safeguarded, and no inconvenience arose.

The Eleventh Army had taken over the line by April 28, and on the same day Mackensen issued his warning order that the artillery would open on May 1 and that the assault would follow on May 2. The presence of Germans on the front was discovered by the Russians on the 25th, but no reinforcements were asked for by General Dmitriev. Even patrolling and vigilance seem to have sunk to a low ebb. Says Dantlov: "Our right front with its huge salient had many weak places. The Russian army was at the end of its power. The uninterrupted fighting in the Carpathians had cost it heavy losses. The deficit in officers and men in many units was terrifying. The lack of arms and munitions was catastrophic. In these circumstances the troops could still do something against the Austrians, but were incapable of stopping serious pressure from an energetic and determined foe." Such was the situation on the eve of the attack.

Gorlice The Bombardment

The German artillery registration began during May 1, and gradually increased throughout the afternoon and night into a harassing fire to prevent the Russians from strengthening their

defences. A two-hours' pause was made from 1 to 3 a.m. during the night, to give the German patrols opportunity for reconnaissance, and their engineers time to destroy wire and obstacles.

At 6 a.m. on the 2nd, the four-hour intense preliminary bombardment began. The Russian overhead-cover of earth and sandbags supported on logs was everywhere smashed in by the German howitzers and trench-mortars. When at 9 a.m. the trench-mortars developed their full intensity, the Russian wire and machine-guns flew into the air. At ten o'clock the trench-mortars ceased firing, the German artillery lifted on to the back lines, and through the dust and smoke, thirty or forty thousand assaulting infantry charged at a rapid pace.

Only where there were woods near the front line or where, owing to hilly ground, the bombardment had not done its work, was there any fighting. The front position was carried with a rush, and the Russian counter-attacks were hurled back upon their second line. After hard fighting all through May 2 this was stormed in its turn.

On the 4th, the IIIrd Caucasian Corps sent from the Russian Army Group reserve attempted to counter-attack, but could do no more than cover the retreat. The Eleventh Army, drawing the Austrian armies on either side forward with them, had now broken completely through the Russian front. Dmitriev's army was annihilated. His divisions, after another week's fighting, could scarcely muster 1,000 men a-piece, 140,000 prisoners, 100 guns and 300 machine-guns fell during the whole operation to the victors, while the trenches were choked with dead and wounded. It had once more been proved that the Russian army in its weakened condition could not withstand the troops of any first-class nation. The whole of the Russian Carpathian front now became untenable, and everywhere along 100 miles of hard-won summits and passes, the Eighth, Eleventh and Ninth Russian Armies retreated with the utmost speed, yielding up march after march the fair province which they had invaded nine months before and deemed their own for ever.

CHAPTER XLVIII

AFTER THE LANDING

Effects of the Landing at Home and Abroad—Italy about to Enter the War—The Anglo-Franco-Italian Naval Convention—Resumption of the Allied Offensive in France—A Casualty Clearing Station—Sinking of the *Lusitania*—Consequences—On Board the *Queen Elizabeth*—Admiral de Robeck's Telegram of May 10—New Factors in the Decision—I Wish to Renew the Attack on the Minefields—Lord Fisher's Agitation—His Memorandum of May 11—Disjointed Resolves—Withdrawal of the *Queen Elizabeth*—Lord Kitchener's Anger—An Arrangement Effected

IN spite of the fact that the army was brought to a standstill, the great event of the landing continued to produce its impression throughout Europe

Effects of the Landing at Home and Abroad

Italy, Greece, Roumania and Bulgaria assumed that now that large allied forces were definitely ashore, they could and would be reinforced from the sea until the Turkish resistance was overcome. The Italian momentum towards war proceeded unchecked and the Balkan states continued in an attitude of strained expectancy. At home the growing political crisis underwent a distinct set-back. The leaders of the Opposition had been advised by high authorities in France that the operation of landing would fail and that the troops would be repulsed at the Beaches with disastrous slaughter. They were of course greatly relieved when these predictions were falsified, and there was for the moment a corresponding easement of tension.

Italy about to Enter the War

On May 5, while the battle on the Peninsula was still undecided, I had to go to Paris for a purpose of great importance. The negotiations with Italy which had been proceeding during March and April had in its last fortnight assumed a decisive character. On April 26 the Treaty of London, by which Italy agreed to come into the war, had been signed.

On May 4 Italy denounced the Triple Alliance, and thereby made public her change of policy. Sir Edward Grey had on medical advice taken a brief spell of rest at the beginning of April, and the Prime Minister for ten days grasped the Italian business in his own hands with downright vigour. On the Foreign Secretary's return the advantage gained had been zealously pursued. The terms of the secret treaty which resulted in the entry of Italy into the war have long since been made public. They reveal with painful clearness the desperate need of the three Allies at this juncture. Locked in the deadly struggle, with the danger of the Russian collapse staring them in the face, and with their own very existence at stake, neither Britain nor France was inclined to be particular about the price they would pay or promise to pay for the accession to the alliance of a new first-class power. The Italian negotiators, deeply conscious of our anxiety, were determined to make the most advantageous bargain they could for their country.

The territorial gains which Italy was to receive on her frontiers, in the Adriatic, and from the Turkish Empire were tremendous. These political prizes were to be supplemented by Military and Naval conventions of the utmost importance. The British Fleet was actively to co-operate with the Italians in the Adriatic, and the Russians were to continue a vigorous offensive with at least 500,000 men against Austria in Galicia. Thus guaranteed both by sea and land, Italy seemed safe to advance and

appropriate the enormous prizes for which she had stipulated

The hopes and calculations which inspired these arrangements were soon to be falsified. Those who launch out upon the stormy voyage of war can never tell beforehand what its length or fortunes will be, or in what port they will at last drop anchor. Within a fortnight of the signature of the Military Convention, Mackensen had fallen upon the Russians along the Dunajec, the battle of Gorlice-Tarnow had been fought, and the Russian Armies were everywhere in retreat and recoil. The apparition of Yugo-Slavia as a strong new power at the end of the war rendered the conditions which Italy had exacted in

the Adriatic obviously inapplicable. And lastly Turkey, beaten in the war, has risen resuscitated and virtually intact from the disasters of the peace.

It was not to an easy war of limited liability and great material gains that Italian statesmen were to send their countrymen. Italy, like the other great combatants, was to be drenched with blood and tears. Year after year, her soil invaded, her manhood shorn away, her treasure spent, her life and honour in jeopardy, must she struggle on to a victory which was to bring no complete satisfaction to her ambitions. But though the calculations of statesmen had failed, the generous heart of the Italian nation proved not unequal to the long trials and



From the drawing by F. Mutania

WIRING PARTY ON THE WESTERN FRONT

The necessary task of erecting barbed wire in front of trench parapets was one requiring both skill and nerve. At points where the opposing lines were but a short distance apart the risks of discovery and death were great. The wiring party in the above drawing has been surprised by an enemy fire and if its presence is detected the prospect of escape will be remote. In this case wooden posts are being employed driven into position by a muffled mallet. Later in the war special iron posts were used which greatly facilitated the work of erecting extensive entanglements.

disappointments of the struggle, nor unworthy to sustain amid its mocking fortunes the ancient fame of Rome

The Anglo-Franco-Italian Naval Convention

As it seemed vital that no hitch nor delay should obstruct the signing of the Naval Convention, I proceeded to Paris armed on behalf of the Admiralty with plenary powers. The Italian apprehension was that if as the result of victory Russia established herself at Constantinople, and if Serbia also gained a great increase of territory, these combined Slavonic powers would develop a strong naval base on or off the Dalmatian coast. The prospect which had arisen from the Dardanelles operations, of Russia possessing Constantinople, forced Italy to make the greatest exertions to secure her own position in the Adriatic, which would

have been irretrievably compromised by an allied victory in which Italy had taken no part. We therefore spent two days in intricate discussions between the French and the Italians about the naval bases which Italy was to secure on the Dalmatian coast in the treaties following a victorious war.

Among these their most important claim was for what was called the Canal of Sabioncello. This strip of good anchorage for the largest vessels between two long islands, out of gunfire from the shore, and half-way down the Adriatic, presented indeed every ideal condition for an Italian naval base. But there were many other claims, and whenever the discussion seemed to prove discouraging to the Italians we threw the



From the drawing by F. Motz

BOMBING A GERMAN TRENCH

No sooner had the opposing armies on the Western Front settled down to trench warfare than it quickly became apparent that the hand grenade would play an important part in every action, great or small. Inventors at home had a busy time, and presently hand and rifle grenades began to make their appearance at the front in a considerable variety of types and designs. Egg bombs and stick bombs as is shown above, were frequently in use by the same bombing party until the evolution of the Mills Hand Grenade the perfect weapon of its kind, rendered all other types obsolete.

British trident into the scale, offering to agree to the request not only for cruisers and flotillas but for a squadron of battleships as well. Since it seemed that Admiral de Robeck had definitely abandoned the attempt to force the Dardanelles, his fleet had clearly ships to spare. In the end a complete agreement was reached between the naval authorities of the three countries. The Italians insisted on having British battleships, and the French without taking offence at this, agreed to replace a British Squadron taken from the Dardanelles by an equal number of their own vessels.

Resumption of the Allied Offensive in France

I left Paris early on the morning of



PHOTOGRAPH BY ILLUSTRATED
EXPLOSION OF A LAND MINE

As has already been shown in the text the presence of mines at sea presented a menace to the great ships of the Grand Fleet with which it was at all times difficult to cope. No less dangerous was the land mine cunningly laid at the terminus of an underground passage driven by a tunnelling company, and so sited by means of measurements and borings that the explosive charge lay directly underneath the enemy. Such a mine could be fired at any time convenient and in practice the explosion was frequently the precursor of an infantry attack.

British and French troops was impossible. The Germans in their front were almost equal in strength, intensely fortified, and fully prepared. The preliminary wire-cutting by shrapnel bombardment had shown them exactly the gaps through which the assaulting troops were to be launched, and one could not doubt that every preparation had been made to mow them down. Moreover the British supplies of shell were extremely limited, and the high explosive needed to shatter the German

the 7th, intending to pass a day at Sir John French's Headquarters on my way back to England. Arrived at St Omer on the evening of the 7th, I learnt two things. Sir Ian Hamilton's telegrams showed that he was in full battle and that no decision was yet manifest on the Peninsula. Secondly, Sir John French intended to begin a general attack directed against the Aubers Ridge in conjunction with the French Army operating on his right against the Souchez position, and this momentous event was fixed for daybreak on the 9th. I therefore stayed to see one battle, glad to keep my mind off the other.

As the reader is aware, I was at this time convinced that the task set to the

trenches was practically non-existent.

I made every effort in my power without incurring unjustifiable risks to view the battle. But neither far off from a lofty steeple nor close up on the fringe of the enemy's barrage was it possible to see anything except shells and smoke. Without actually taking part in the assault it was impossible to measure the real conditions. To see them you had to feel them, and feeling them might well feel nothing more. To stand outside was to see nothing, to plunge in was to be dominated by personal experiences of an absorbing kind. This was one of the cruellest features of the war. Many of the generals in the higher commands did not know the conditions with which

their troops were ordered to contend, nor were they in a position to devise the remedies which could have helped them

A Casualty Clearing Station

On the evening of this day I witnessed also the hideous spectacle of a large casualty clearing station in the height of a battle. More than 1,000 men suffering from every form of horrible injury, seared, torn, pierced, choking, dying, were being sorted according to their miseries into the different parts of the Convent at Merville.

At the entrance the arrival and departure of the motor ambulances, each with its four or five shattered and tortured beings, was incessant. From the back door corpses were being carried out at brief intervals to a hurrying party constantly at work. One room was filled to overflowing with cases not worth sending any farther,

cases whose hopelessness excluded them from priority in operations. Other rooms were filled with "walking wounded" all in much pain, but most in good spirits. For these a cup of tea, a cigarette, and another long motor journey were reserved. An unbroken file of urgent and critical cases were pressed towards the operating room, the door of which was wide open and revealed as I passed the terrible spectacle of a man being trepanned. Everywhere was blood and bloody rags. Outside in the quadrangle the drumming thunder of the cannonade proclaimed that the process of death and mutilation was still at its height.

* * * *

Sinking of the *Lusitania*

In these days also came in the news of the sinking of the *Lusitania*. This gigantic liner had for some months definitely



IN A BATTALION HEADQUARTERS NEAR YPRES, 1915 From a drawing by P. Matania

A scene typical of many up and down the British line in France. At no time during the war, save in cases where they had been captured from the enemy, did British soldiers enjoy the security of the concrete caverns so plentiful in the strong German lines. A ruined farmhouse, a corrugated iron shelter covered with a few sandbags or a comparatively shallow dug out served the purposes of the British troops. At all times eager and expecting to advance they attached but little importance to the safe but permanent structure. As the years passed officers and men alike became increasingly adaptable and able to make for themselves comfortable homes wherever they happened to be.

returned to passenger service, and had made several round trips across the Atlantic in that capacity. In the first week of May she was returning to Liverpool from New York, having on board nearly 2,000 persons all non-combatants, British and American. Included in her cargo was a small consignment of rifle ammunition and shrapnel shells weighing about 173 tons. Warnings that the vessel would be sunk, afterwards traced to the German Government, were circulated in New York before she sailed. On May 4 and 5, while she was approaching the British Isles, German U-boats were reported about the southern entrance to the Irish Channel, and two merchant ships were sunk. Further reports of submarine activity in this area came in on the 6th. In consequence repeated and specific warnings and information were transmitted from the Admiralty wireless station at Valentia.

May 6, 12 5 a m To all British ships

Avoid headlands Pass harbours at full speed Steer mid-channel course Submarines off Fastnet

May 6, 7 50 p m To *Lusitania*

Submarines active off south coast of Ireland

May 7, 11 25 a m To all British ships

Submarines active in southern part of Irish Channel Last heard of south of Coningheg Lighthouse Make certain *Lusitania* gets this

May 7, 12 40 p m To *Lusitania*

Submarines five miles south of Cape Clear proceeding west when sighted at 10 a m

All these messages were duly received

The Admiralty confidential Memorandum of April 16, 1915, contained the following passage —

"War experience has shown that fast steamers can considerably reduce the chance of successful surprise submarine attack by zigzagging, that is to say, altering the course at short and irregular intervals, say in ten minutes to half an hour. This course is almost invariably adopted by warships when cruising in an area known to be infested with sub-

marines. The underwater speed of a submarine is very low, and it is exceedingly difficult for her to get into position to deliver an attack unless she can preserve and predict the course of the ship attacked."

In spite of these warnings and instructions, for which the Admiralty Trade Division deserve credit, the *Lusitania* was proceeding along the usual trade route without zigzagging at little more than three-quarter speed when, at 2 10 p m on May 7, she was torpedoed eight miles off the Old Head of Kinsdale by Commander Schweiger in the German submarine U 20. Two torpedoes were fired, the first striking her amidships with a tremendous explosion, and the second a few minutes later striking her aft. In twenty minutes she foundered by the head, carrying with her 1,195 persons, of whom 291 were women and 94 infants or small children.

Consequences

This crowning outrage of the U-boat war resounded through the world. The United States whose citizens had perished in large numbers, was convulsed with indignation, and in all parts of the great Republic the signal for armed intervention was awaited by the strongest elements of the American people. It was not given, and the war continued in its destructive equipose. But henceforward the friends of the Allies in the United States were armed with a weapon against which German influence was powerless, and before which after a lamentable interval cold-hearted policy was destined to succumb.

Even in the first moments of realizing the tragedy and its horror, I understood the significance of the event. As the history of the Great War is pondered over, its stern lessons stand forth from the tumult and confusion of the times. On two supreme occasions the German Imperial Government, quenching compunction, outfacing conscience, deliberately, with calculation, with sinister resolve, severed the underlying bonds which sustained the civilization of the world and united even in their quarrels the human family. The invasion of Belgium and the unlimited U-boat war



From a drawing by F. Melara

THE TRAGEDY OF THE LUSITANIA

Shortly after 2 p. m. on May 7, 1915, the Cunard liner *Lusitania* was off Queenstown homeward bound from the United States. She had on board, including her crew, nearly two thousand men, women and children. At about the same time the German submarine U 20, commanded by Commander Schweiger, was in the vicinity, and this officer, about ten minutes past two, fired two torpedoes at the Cunarder, which resulted in the great ship going to the bottom with most of her passengers and crew. This submarine triumph was loudly acclaimed in Germany and equally loudly denounced in America.

were both resorted to on expert dictation as the only means of victory. They proved the direct cause of ruin. They drew into the struggle against Germany mighty and intangible powers by which her strength was remorselessly borne down.

Nothing could have deprived Germany of victory in the first year of war except the invasion of Belgium, nothing could have denied it to her in its last year except her unlimited submarine campaign. Not to the number of her enemies, nor to their resources or wisdom, not to the mistakes of her Admirals and Generals in open battle, not to the weakness of her allies, not assuredly to any fault in the valour or loyalty of her population or her armies, but only to these two grand crimes and blunders of history, were her undoing and our salvation due.

* * * *

On Board the *Queen Elizabeth*

Meanwhile in the Flagship at the Dardanelles the most vehement discussion had been taking place.

Since March 18, two distinct currents of opinion had flowed in high naval circles. The forward school had been more than ever convinced that the quelling of the forts, the sweeping of the minefield, and ultimately the forcing of the Straits were practicable operations. They had no doubt whatever that the Fleet could make its way through into the Marmora. They had continually impressed upon the Admiral the duty of the Navy to attempt this task. Grieved beyond measure at the cruel losses that the Army had sustained, out of all proportion to anything expected, they felt it almost unendurable that the Navy should sit helpless and inactive after the orders they had received and the undertakings made on their behalf. They therefore pressed their Chief to propose to the Admiralty the renewal of the naval attack.

All these pressures and the spectacle of the Army's torment produced their effect upon a man of the courage and quality of Admiral de Robeck. He finally resolved to send a telegram to the Admiralty expressing his willingness

to renew the naval attack. The telegram bears the imprint of several hands and of opposite opinions. But apparently, as we now know, all present at these conferences in the *Queen Elizabeth* believed that the telegram would be followed by immediate orders for battle from the Admiralty. Admiral Guepratte, the French Commander, telegraphed to the Minister of Marine showing that he fully expected to be launched in decisive attack and asking for an additional and stronger ship to reinforce the French Squadron. All the naval staff and commanders rested, therefore, under the impression of a great and sublime decision in pursuance of which they would readily face every risk and endure every loss.

Admiral de Robeck's Telegram of May 10

Vice-Admiral de Robeck to Admiralty

May 10, 1915

The position in the Gallipoli Peninsula. General Hamilton informs me that the Army is checked, its advance on Ach Baba can only be carried out by a few yards at a time, and a condition of affairs approximate to that in Northern France is threatened. The situation therefore arises, as indicated in my telegram 292 —

"If the Army is checked in its advance on Kild Bahr, the question whether the Navy should not force the Narrows, leaving the forts intact, will depend entirely whether the Fleet could assist the Army in their advance to the Narrows hest from below Chanak with communications intact or from above cut off from its base."

The help which the Navy has been able to give the Army in its advance has not been as great as was anticipated, though effective in keeping down the fire of the enemy's batteries, when it is a question of trenches and machine guns the Navy is of small assistance, it is these latter that have checked the Army.

From the vigour of the enemy's resistance it is improbable that the passage of the Fleet into the Marmora will be decisive and therefore it is equally probable that the Straits will

be closed behind the Fleet. This will be of slight importance if the resistance of the enemy could be overcome in time to prevent the enforced withdrawal of the Fleet owing to lack of supplies.

The supporting of attack of Army, should the Fleet penetrate to the Sea of Marmora, will be entrusted to the cruisers and certain older battleships including some of the French, whose ships are not fitted for a serious bombardment of the Narrows, this support will obviously be much less than is now given by the whole of the Fleet.

The temper of the Turkish Army in the Peninsula indicates that the forcing of the Dardanelles and subsequent appearance of the Fleet off Constantinople will not, of itself, prove decisive.

The points for decision appear to be —

First—Can the Navy by forcing the Dardanelles ensure the success of the operations?

Second—If the Navy were to suffer a reverse, which of necessity could only be a severe one, would the position of the Army be so critical as to jeopardize the whole of the operations?

New Factors in the Decision

This message deserved very attentive study. It was clearly intended to raise the direct issue of the renewal of the naval attempt to force the Straits. In it Admiral de Robeck balanced the pros and cons on the whole with an emphasis on the latter. But at the same time he intimated unmistakably his readiness to make the attempt if the Admiralty gave the order. His telegram caused me much perturbation. I was of course, as always, in favour of renewing the naval attack. But the situation at this moment was very different from what it had been in March and April, and in pursuance of Admiral de Robeck's decision of March 22 we were now following another line of policy. Three important events had taken place.

First, the army had been landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula with a loss of nearly 20,000 men. That army was, it is true, arrested, but Lord Kitchener had told me that he intended to reinforce it with the whole Army Corps for which Sir Ian Hamilton had asked.

The landing under fire had always been the feature in the operation most to be dreaded. It had been accomplished, and it seemed that since the Turks had not been able to prevent the landing, they would certainly fail to stop the further advance of the Army, if the ample reinforcements which were available were rapidly poured in. There were, therefore, at this moment reasonable prospects of carrying the military operation through to success if adequate military reinforcements were sent with promptitude.

Secondly, Italy was about to enter the war. The Anglo-Italian Naval Convention which we had just signed obliged us to send four battleships and four light cruisers to join the Italian Fleet in the Adriatic. I had undertaken this on the basis which had ruled ever since March 22 that Admiral de Robeck had definitely abandoned the naval attack and that we were committed to fight the issue out by military force. The withdrawal of these ships from Admiral de Robeck's fleet, although mitigated by French reinforcements, was incompatible with a decision to make a determined or even desperate effort to force the Dardanelles by ships alone.

Thirdly, what we had so long dreaded had at last come to pass. The German submarines had arrived in the Aegean. One or perhaps two, or even three, were reported on different occasions in the neighbourhood of the Dardanelles. The position of the *Queen Elizabeth* became one of exceptional danger, and the security of the whole Fleet at the Dardanelles was affected to an extent which could not be readily measured. Moreover, if the Fleet succeeded in forcing the passage and arrived in the Marmora, it would be harassed in that sea by German submarines. Though this fact was not conclusive, the action of the Fleet would be impeded and, on the assumption that the Straits closed up behind it, its effective strategic life would be to a certain extent curtailed.

Furthermore, the responsibilities of the Fleet now that the army was landed and heavily engaged were very greatly increased. As Admiral Oliver pithily

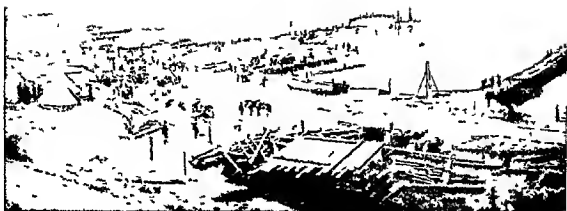


Photo Imperial War Museum

THE LANDING STAGES OF LANCASHIRE LANDING (1)

The scene of the gallant exploits of the 1st Bn The Lancashire Fusiliers who landed here shortly after 6 a.m. on the morning of April 25, 1915. In the interval between that fine feat of arms and the month of May, Lancashire Landing, or "W" Beach was, by reason of its suitability for the purpose, transformed into a landing place for stores and reinforcements.

put it—"On March 18 the Fleet was single, now it has a wife on shore"

I wish to renew the Attack on the Minefields

All these considerations were present in my mind. Their cumulative effect was very great. Of course if Admiral de Robeck continued willing to make a decisive attack, it would be possible in a few weeks to recreate the conditions which would enable him to do so. Our naval resources were enormous and increasing almost daily. We could by the middle of June have raised his Fleet to a greater strength than ever, and have perfected in every detail the preparations for the attempt. Moreover, by then we should have known where we stood with the German submarines in the Aegean and what that menace amounted to. For the moment, however, the arguments against decisive naval action were very weighty.

On the other hand, I was extremely anxious for a limited operation. I wished the Fleet to engage the forts at the Narrows, and thus test the reports which we had received about the shortage of ammunition. Under cover of this

engagement I wished the Keppez minefield to be swept and got out of the way. These were perfectly feasible operations now that the mine-sweeping force was thoroughly organized, and the Dardanelles fleet, although reduced, was ample for their purpose. The elimination of the Keppez minefield would in itself begin to imperil the communications of the army the Turks were building up on the Peninsula.

Lord Fisher's Agitation

I could see, however, that Lord Fisher was under considerable strain. His seventy-four years lay heavy upon him. During my absence in Paris upon the negotiations for the Anglo-Italian Naval Convention he had shown great nervous exhaustion. He had evinced unconcealed distress and anxiety at being left alone in sole charge of the Admiralty. There is no doubt that the old Admiral was worried almost out of his wits by the immense pressure of the times and by the course events had taken. Admiral de Robeck's telegram distressed him extremely. He expected to be confronted with the demand he hated most and dreaded most, the



Photo Imperial War Museum

THE LANDING STAGES OF LANCASHIRE LANDING (2)

The long stretch of beach sheltered from the Turkish lines by cliffs in which most of the officers and men employed on the beach had their abodes, was an admirable dumping ground for fodder rations and water. Unfortunately the beach could be fired upon from the Asiatic shore, and it became necessary, by means of a system of signals, to warn the workers on the beaches each time the Asiatic guns were observed to fire.

renewal of the naval battle and fighting the matter out to a conclusion.

On the morning of the 11th we discussed the situation together. I endeavoured repeatedly to make it clear that all I wanted was the sweeping of the Kephez minefield under cover of a renewed engagement of the forts at the Narrows, and that I had no idea of pressing for a decisive effort to force the Straits and penetrate the Marmora. However, I failed to remove his anxieties. No doubt he felt that if the operation were successful, the case for the main thrust in a subsequent stage would be enormously strengthened, and no doubt this was true. The Kephez minefield was his as well as the Turks' first line of defence.

His Memorandum of May 11

After our conversation, Lord Fisher sent me on the same day "with much reluctance" a formal memorandum which presented a full and forceful restatement of his views of the Dardanelles operations, leading to the conclusion that he could not

under any circumstances he a

party to any order to Admiral de Robeck to make an attempt to pass the Dardanelles until the shores have been effectively occupied. I therefore wish it to be clearly understood that I disassociate myself from any such project.

I replied on the same day that he would never receive from me any proposition to "rush" the Dardanelles, and that I agreed with his views on the subject. I returned to the possibility that Admiral de Robeck might be called upon to engage the forts and sweep the Kephez minefield as an aid to the military operations. Expressing again my hope that any real issue would always find us united, I appealed to him—

We are now committed to one of the greatest amphibious enterprises in history. You are absolutely committed. Comradeship, resource, firmness, patience, all in the highest degree will be needed to carry the matter through to victory.

He wrote me next day that since my reply had not definitely repudiated the idea of a naval attack on the minefield before the army had occupied the shores

of the Narrows, he had sent the Prime Minister a copy of his memorandum to me

With reference to your remark that I am absolutely committed, I have only to say that you must know (as the Prime Minister also) that my unwilling acquiescence did not extend to such a further gamble as any repetition of March 18 until the Army had done their part

Disjointed Resolves

Thus it will be seen that never after March 22 were the Admiralty and the Naval Commander-in-Chief able to come to a simultaneous resolve to attack. On the 21st all were united. Thereafter, when one was hot the other was cold. On March 23 and 24 the Admiralty without issuing actual orders pressed strongly for the attack, and the Admiral on the spot said "No." On May 10 the Admiral on the spot was willing, but the Admiralty said "No." On August 18, under the impression of the disaster at Suvla Bay, the Admiralty raised the question again and authorized the Admiral to use his old battleships to the fullest extent, and the Admiral met them by a reasoned but decisive refusal. Lastly, in the advent of the final evacuation Admiral Wemyss, who had succeeded to the command, armed with plans drawn up in the most complete detail by Commodore Keyes for forcing the Straits, made vehement appeals for sanction to execute them and this time the Admiralty refused

* * * *

The bad news which came in from Russia, from France, and from the Dardanelles at this time, and the impression I had sustained while with the army, led me to issue the following general minute to all Admiralty Departments —

Secretary and Members of the Board

May 11, 1915

Please inform all heads of Departments in the Admiralty, that for the present it is to be assumed that the war will not end before December 31, 1916. All Admiralty arrangements and plans should be prepared on this basis, and any measures for the strengthening of our naval power, which will become effective before that date, may be

considered. This applies to all questions of personnel, ships, armaments and stores, and to the organization and maintenance of the Fleet and Dockyards, which must be adapted to a long period of continually developing strength without undue strain. I await proposals from all departments for the development and expansion of their activities

W S C

* * * *

Withdrawal of the *Queen Elizabeth*

On the night of May 12 the *Gotha* was torpedoed and sunk in the Dardanelles by a Turkish destroyer manned by a German crew. This event determined Lord Fisher to bring the *Queen Elizabeth* home, and he made upon me a most strenuous counter-demand to that effect. I did not myself object to this. The first two 14-inch gun monitors (then named *Stonehall Jackson* and *Admiral Farragut*) were now ready, and I agreed with the First Sea Lord that the *Queen Elizabeth* should return, if they and other monitors, two battleships of the "Duncan" class, and certain additional vessels, were sent to replace her. He was very much relieved at this and was grateful. The position into which we had got was most painful. He wished at all costs to cut the loss and come away from the hated scene. I was bound, not only by every conviction, but by every call of honour, to press the enterprise and sustain our struggling army to the full.

Lord Kitchener's Anger

I had now to break the news to Lord Kitchener. I invited him to come to a conference at the Admiralty on the evening of May 13. We sat round the octagonal table, Lord Kitchener on my left, Lord Fisher on my right, together with various other officers of high rank. As soon as Lord Kitchener realized that the Admiralty were going to withdraw the *Queen Elizabeth*, he became extremely angry. His habitual composure in trying ordeals left him. He protested vehemently against what he considered the desertion of the army at its most critical moment. On the other side Lord Fisher flew into an even greater

fury "The *Queen Elizabeth* would come home, she would come home at once, she would come home that night, or he would walk out of the Admiralty then and there"

Could we but have exchanged the positions of these two potentates at this juncture, have let Kitchener hold the Admiralty to its task, and sent Fisher to the War Office to slam in the reinforcements, both would have been happy and all would have been well

An Arrangement Effected

Such solutions were beyond us I stood by my agreement with the First Sea Lord, and did my utmost to explain to Lord Kitchener that the monitors would give equally good support with far less risk to naval strength I recounted to him the vessels we were sending, and offered him the most solemn guarantees—in which I was supported by the Naval Staff—of our resolve to sustain the army by the most effectual means I thought he was to some extent reassured before he left

I therefore agreed with Lord Fisher in a series of telegrams We instructed

Admiral de Robeck to send the *Queen Elizabeth* home with all dispatch and utmost secrecy We informed him that *Exmouth* and *Venerable* would join his command at once, and before the end of the month he would have the first two monitors, the last word in hombaring vessels, their gain would more than compensate for the loss of the *Queen Elizabeth* The first six monitors as delivered would be sent to him As soon as the French Squadron under his command had been raised to a total of six battleships, he was to send the *Queen, London, Implacable* and *Prince of Wales* under Rear-Admiral Thursby—also with utmost secrecy—to Malta in readiness for service with the Italian Fleet in the Adriatic, in order to meet the provisions of the Anglo-Italian Naval Convention We informed Admiral de Robeck that we thought the moment for an independent naval attempt to force the Narrows had passed, and would not arise again under existing conditions, accordingly, his role was to support the army in its advance

On these telegrams—the last we ever sent together—Lord Fisher and I parted for the night



DESPATCH RIDERS ON GALLIPOLI

Photo Central News

The despatch rider's lot whilst on duty at Helles was the reverse of uneventful In carrying orders and messages to and from the various headquarters he was required to ride his motor-bicycle over rough roads, long stretches of which were under observation from the Turkish trenches Not infrequently an unfortunate message bearer could be seen, driving at speed, pursued by shells from the slopes of Achi Baba

CHAPTER XLIX

THE FALL OF THE GOVERNMENT

The War Council of May 11, 1915—Mr Churchill and the *Queen Elizabeth*—On Fears of Invasion—After the Council—The Italian Crisis—Dispatch of the British Cruisers—Resignation of Lord Fisher—A Difficult Situation—A New Combination—The Issue in the House of Commons—Interview with the Prime Minister—Sortie of the High Sea Fleet—The Naval Situation at Dawn on May 18—Progress of the Political Crisis—Sir Arthur Wilson's Letter—Undeclaration—The Italian Declaration of War against Austria—Lord Fisher's Ultimatum—Formation of the First Coalition Government—A Visit of Ceremony—Sir Arthur Wilson's Refusal—My Letter to Mr Balfour—I Leave the Admiralty—The Naval Position—The Inheritance—Great Naval Leaders

THE War Council of May 11 was sulphurous

The War Council of May 14, 1915

We were in presence of the fact that Sir Ian Hamilton's army had been definitely brought to a standstill on the Gallipoli Peninsula, was suspended there in circumstances of peril, was difficult to reinforce, and still more difficult to withdraw. The Fleet had relapsed into passivity. Lord Fisher had insisted on the withdrawal of the *Queen Elizabeth*. German submarines were about to enter the Aegean, where our enormous concentrations of shipping necessary to support the Dardanelles operations lay in a very unprotected state. At the same time the failure of the British attacks in France on the Aubers Ridge was unmistakable. Sir John French's army had lost nearly 20,000 men without substantial results, and General Headquarters naturally demanded increased supplies of men and ammunition. The shell crisis had reached its explosion point—the shortage had been disclosed in *The Times* that morning—and behind it marched a political crisis of the first order. The weakness and failure of Russia were becoming every month more evident. Intense anxiety and extreme bad temper, all suppressed under formal demeanour, characterized the discussion.

Lord Kitchener began in a strain of solemn and formidable complaint. He had been induced to participate in the Dardanelles operations on the assurances of the Navy that they would force the passage. Now they had abandoned the attempt. Most particularly his judgment had been affected by the unique qualities of the *Queen Elizabeth*. Now she was to be withdrawn, she was to be withdrawn at the very moment when he had committed his army to a great operation on the Gallipoli Peninsula, and when that army was struggling for its life with its back to the sea. Lord Fisher at this point interjected that he had been against the Dardanelles operations from the beginning, and that the Prime Minister and Lord Kitchener knew this fact well.

This remarkable interruption was received in silence. The Secretary of State for War then proceeded to survey other theatres of the war in an extremely pessimistic mood. The army in France was firing away shells at a rate which no military administration had ever been asked to sustain. The orders which had been placed for ammunition of every kind were all being completed late. The growing weakness of Russia might at any time enable the Germans to transfer troops to the west and resume the offensive against us. Thirdly, he proceeded to dilate upon

the dangers of invasion. How could he tell what would happen? Great Britain must be defended at all costs, all the more if other affairs miscarried. In these circumstances he could not send Sir John French the four new divisions he had promised him; they must be reserved for home defence.

Mr Churchill and the *Queen Elizabeth*

When he had finished, the Council turned to me—almost on me. I thereupon spoke in the sense of the series of arguments with which the reader should now be familiar. If it had been known three months before that an army of from 80,000 to 100,000 men would be available in May for an attack on the Dardanelles, the attack by the Navy alone would never have been undertaken. Though matters had gone badly in many quarters and great disappointments had been experienced, there was no reason for despondency or alarm, still less to make things out worse than they were or to take unreasonable action.

The naval operations at the Dardanelles did not depend and had never depended upon the *Queen Elizabeth*. They had been planned before it was known that she would go. She was now to be withdrawn because of the danger of submarines to so invaluable a ship. She would be replaced by monitors and other specially designed vessels better suited in many respects to bombarding operations and largely immune from submarine attack. The naval support of the army would in no way be affected. It was no good exaggerating the value of the *Queen Elizabeth*, or supposing that a great operation of this kind could turn on a single vessel.

As for the shell shortage, that would remedy itself if we made the greatest exertions and did not meanwhile embark on premature offensives without adequate superiority in men, guns or ammunition.

On Fears of Invasion

Lastly, what was this talk about invasion? The Admiralty did not believe that any landing in force could

be effected, still less, if effected, that it could be sustained and nourished. What grounds were there for supposing that the enemy, now fully committed to the eastward effort against Russia, would spin round and bring troops back to invade England or attack the Western Front? And how many would they bring, and how long would it take? Stop these vain offensives on the Western Front until the new armies were ready and sufficient ammunition was accumulated. Concentrate the available reinforcements upon the Dardanelles and give them such ammunition as was necessary to reach a decision there at the earliest possible moment. Discard these alarms about the invasion of an island no longer denuded of troops as in 1914, but bristling with armed men and guarded by a fleet far stronger relatively than at the beginning of the war and possessed of sources of information never previously dreamed of. Let Sir John French have the new divisions for which he had asked, but otherwise remain on the defensive in France.

I am not quoting the actual words in either case, but their gist. The sense is fully sustained by the abbreviated records. These considerations appeared to produce a definite impression upon the Council. We separated without any decision. My arguments were, however, accepted almost in their entirety by the Coalition Administration which came into existence a few weeks later, and every one of the suppositions on which they rested was vindicated by events. The departure of the *Queen Elizabeth* did not prevent the naval support of the army at Gallipoli nor its supply by sea. The British and French offensives in France continued to fail for the next three years with ever-increasing bloody slaughter and the fruitless destruction of our new armies. The Germans did not and could not arrest their drive against Russia, which was in fact on the eve of its full intensity. They did not come back to the west, nor was it physically possible for them to do so for many months to come. They did not invade England; they never thought of invading England.

at this period, nor could they have done it had they tried

However, events were now to supervene in the British political sphere which were destined fatally to destroy the hopes of a successful issue at the Dardanelles and preclude all possibility of a speedy termination of the war

After the Council

After the Council I wrote the following letter to the Prime Minister which I think shows exactly where I stood —

Mr Churchill to the Prime Minister

May 14, 1915

I must ask you to take note of Fisher's statement to-day that "he was against the Dardanelles and had been all along," or words to that effect. The First Sea Lord has agreed in writing to every executive telegram on which the operations have been conducted, and had they been immediately successful, the credit would have been his. But I make no complaint of that. I am attached to the old boy and it is a great pleasure to me to work with him. I think he reciprocates these feelings. My point is that a moment will probably arise in these operations when the Admiral and General on the spot will wish and require to run a risk with the Fleet for a great and decisive effort. If I agree with them, I shall sanction it, and I cannot undertake to be paralysed by the veto of a friend who whatever the result will certainly say, "I was always against the Dardanelles."

You will see that in a matter of this kind *someone* has to take the responsibility. I will do so—provided that my decision is the one that rules—and not otherwise.

It is also uncomfortable not to know what Kitchener will or won't do in the matter of reinforcements. We are absolutely in his hands, and I never saw him in a queerer mood—or more unreasonable. K will punish the Admiralty by docking Hamilton of his divisions because we have withdrawn the *Queen Elizabeth*, and Fisher will have the *Queen Elizabeth* home if he is to stay.

Through all this with patience and determination we can make our way to one of the great events in the history of the world.

But I wish now to make it clear to you that a man who says, "I disclaim responsibility for failure," cannot be the final arbiter of the measures which may be found to be vital to success.

* * * *

I spent the afternoon completing my proposals for the naval reinforcement of the Dardanelles and for the conveying of the two divisions with which I understood and trusted Sir Ian Hamilton was to be immediately reinforced.

Although there could be very little doubt about what naval reinforcements were needed, I did not want the demands to fall upon Lord Fisher with a shock. I therefore went into his room in the evening to talk over the whole position with him. Our conversation was quite friendly. He did not object to any of the particular measures proposed, but as usual he did not like the steady and increasing drain on our resources and the infection given to our campaign by the growing demands of the Dardanelles. I then said to him that it was really not fair for him to obstruct the necessary steps at the Dardanelles and then, if there was a failure, to turn round and say, "I told you so, I was always against it." He looked at me in an odd way and said, "I think you are right—it isn't fair." However, he accepted the minutes and we parted amicably.

* * * *

The Italian Crisis

Into this extraordinary period, when intense situations succeeded each other with dizzying rapidity, another event was now to break. Following the method which I had adopted since Lord Fisher came to the Admiralty, I resumed work in my room at about 10 o'clock that night. The Italian crisis was at its height. The Italian Government had resigned in consequence of the opposition to Italy entering the war, and this enormous and brilliant event which we had re-



*By courtesy of being General D. H. Drake Brockman, C.M.G.,
from the painting by J. P. Brad's*

NEUVE CHAPELLE MARCH in 1915

This fine picture is entitled Neuve Chapelle March in 1915 2nd Rifle Brigade and 29th Garhwal Rifles clearing the village. The battle of Neuve Chapelle opened at 7.30 a.m. on March 10, 1915 the destruction of the German obstacles and trenches being entrusted to the artillery of the Indian Corps. By 8.50 a.m. the attack had progressed sufficiently to bring the assaulting troops to the village itself and at that hour Neuve Chapelle was entered by the 2nd Bn. The Rifle Brigade, who are seen here cleaning up after the attack.

garded as almost settled more than a fortnight before, now appeared once again to be thrown into the melting-pot.

A little before midnight the Italian Naval Attache, an officer ardently devoted to the cause of the Allies, asked to see me. He was accompanied by Admiral Ohver, who had a file of papers. The Naval Attache said that the uncertainty and convulsions now prevailing in Rome made it vital that the arrangements for naval co-operation which had been conceived a week before in Paris should be brought into immediate effect. Under these arrangements we were to send *inter alia* four light cruisers to reinforce the Italian Fleet in the Adriatic. These cruisers were to reach Taranto by day-

break on the 18th. The Naval Attache urged that their arrival should be accelerated. If they could arrive by the morning of the 16th, definite naval co-operation between Great Britain and Italy would be an accomplished fact, and this fact might well be decisive.

Dispatch of the British Cruisers

As I had myself negotiated the Naval Convention with Italy in Paris, I was of course fully acquainted with every detail. I had procured the First Sea Lord's agreement to all its terms, including the dispatch of the four cruisers. These cruisers had been detailed Fisher's green initial directing their movement was prominent on the second page of the file. No question of principle was involved by accelerating their

departure by forty-eight hours. It did not come within the limits of the working arrangement which Fisher and I had made with each other, viz. to take no important step except in consultation. It never occurred to me for a moment that it could be so viewed, nor did the Chief of the Staff suggest that we should wake up the First Sea Lord. He would begin his letters at about 4 o'clock in the morning and he would get the file then. I therefore approved the

immediate dispatch of these cruisers and wrote, as I had done in similar cases before, "First Sea Lord to see after action."

For more than ten years I believed that this phrase was the spark that fired the train. We are assured however by Lord Fisher's biographers that he never saw the Italian paper until after he had resigned. Admiral Bacon in his *Life of Lord Fisher*, basing himself upon the first-hand evidence of Captain Crease,

states explicitly that the fact that I had on this night proposed to the First Sea Lord the sending of two more submarines to the Dardanelles in addition to the reinforcements we had agreed upon in the evening, was "the last straw." If this be true the pretext is not the less scanty.

But the cause behind the pretext was, as these pages may perhaps have shown, substantial. The old Admiral, walking in the early morning, saw himself confronted again with the minutes proposing the reinforcements for the Dardanelles which he knew he could not resist. He saw himself becoming ever more deeply involved in an enterprise which he distrusted and disliked. He saw that enterprise quivering on the verge of failure. He saw a civilian Minister, to whom indeed he was attached by many bonds of friendship, becoming every day a hard and stern taskmaster in all that was needed to sustain the hated oper-



Photo Copyright

FIRING A TRENCH TORPEDO

Trench torpedoes and trench mortars of various types were among the best-hated weapons employed on any front. They varied in size from the small but quick-firing Stokes gun to trench guns or mortars which were capable of lobbing heavy missiles into an enemy trench. The above illustration is of an aerial torpedo fitted with wings to enable it to maintain a straight course. The presence of a trench mortar as soon as its whereabouts was located by the enemy was quite sufficient to bring down upon the heads of the infantry a severe rain of shells from the enemy artillery.

ation. He saw the furious discontents of the Conservative Party at the shell shortage and the general conduct of the war. He saw a Field-Marshal in uniform at the head of the War Office, while he, whose name was a watchword throughout the country was relegated to a secondary place, and in that place was compelled by arguments and pressures he had never been able to resist, but had never ceased to resent, to become responsible for operations to which he had taken an intense dislike. The hour had come.

* * *

Resignation of Lord Fisher

When I awoke the next morning, Saturday, I received no morning letter from the First Sea Lord. This was unusual, for he nearly always wrote me his waking thoughts on the situation. I had to go over to the Foreign Office at about nine o'clock and was kept there some time. As I was returning across the Horse Guards' Parade, Masterton-Smith hurried up to me with an anxious face—"Fisher has resigned, and I think he means it this time." He gave me the following note from the First Sea Lord—

First Lord

May 15, 1915

After further anxious reflection I have come to the regretted conclusion I am unable to remain any longer as your colleague. It is undesirable in the public interests to go into details—Jowett said, "never explain"—but I find it increasingly difficult to adjust myself to the increasing daily requirements of the Dardanelles to meet your views—as you truly said yesterday I am in the position of continually vetoing your proposals.

This is not fair to you besides being extremely distasteful to me.

I am off to Scotland at once so as to avoid all questionings.

Yours truly,
FISHER

I did not, however, at first take a serious view. I remembered a similar letter couched in terms of the utmost formality earlier in the year on the air raids, and he had threatened or hinted

resignation both in letters and in conversation on all sorts of matters, big and small, during the last four or five months. I was pretty sure that a good friendly talk would put matters right. However, when I got back to the Admiralty I found that he had entirely disappeared. He was not in the building, he was not in his house. None of his people knew where he was except that he was going to Scotland at once. He had sent a communication to the other Sea Lords which they were engaged in discussing at a meeting of their own.

A Difficult Situation

I went over to the Prime Minister and reported the facts. Mr. Asquith immediately sent his Secretary with a written order commanding Lord Fisher in the name of the King to return to his duty. It was some hours before the First Sea Lord was discovered. He refused point-blank to re-enter the Admiralty or to discharge any function. He reiterated his determination to proceed at once to Scotland. He was, however, at length persuaded to come and see the Prime Minister. I was not present at the interview. After it was over Mr. Asquith told me that he thought he had shaken him in his intention, but that he was very much upset. He advised me to write to him, adding, "If you can get him back, well and good, but if not it will be a very difficult situation."

I tried my best. Again and again I had persuaded him by the written word. It was useless.

You, he replied, ARE BENT ON FORCING THE DARDANELLES AND NOTHING WILL TURN YOU FROM IT—NOTHING. I know you so well! I could give you no better proof of my desire to stand by you than my having remained by you in this Dardanelles business up to this last moment against the strongest conviction of my life as stated in the Dardanelles Defence Committee Memorandum.

You will remain and I SHALL GO—it is better so. Your splendid stand on my behalf I can never forget when you took your political life in your hands,



From the painting by W. B. Wollen. Copyright reserved for owner by Royal Academy Illustrated

THE CANADIANS AT YPRES

This spirited picture has for its subject the magnificent fighting qualities displayed by the Canadians during the operations which followed upon the German gas attack in April, 1915. The retirement of the French Colonial troops on the Canadian left exposed a flank, and the Canadians fought desperately and successfully to maintain their positions. The Canadian troops in the years to follow were to give many more proofs of their quality, but in the battle before Ypres in April 1915, they built up a reputation which they worthily upheld until Armistice Day, 1918.

and I really have worked very hard for you in return—my utmost—but here is a question beyond all personal obligations. I assure you it is only painful having further conversations. I have told the Prime Minister I will not remain. I have absolutely decided to stick to that decision. Nothing will turn me from it. You say with much feeling that *it will be a very great grief to you to part from me*—I am certain you know in your heart no one has ever been more faithful to you than I have since I joined you last October. *I have worked my very hardest*

A New Combination

It was no use persisting, and I turned to consider new combinations. I was by no means sure that I should not be confronted with the resignation of the other three Sea Lords. On the Sunday

morning, however, I learned that Sir Arthur Wilson had been consulted by the Sea Lords and that he had informed them that it was their duty to remain at their posts and that no case for resignation had arisen. I was led by this fact to ask Sir Arthur Wilson whether he would be willing himself to fill the vacancy of First Sea Lord. He asked for an hour to consider the matter, and then to my gratification, and I will add surprise, he informed me that he would do so.

By Sunday at noon I was in a position to reconstitute the Board of Admiralty in all respects. I then motored down to the Prime Minister, who was in the country. I told him that Lord Fisher's resignation was final, and that my office was at his disposal if he required to make a change. He said, "No, I have thought of that. I do not

wish it, but can you get a Board?" I then told him that all the other Members of the Board would remain, and that Sir Arthur Wilson would take Lord Fisher's place. I understood him to assent to this arrangement. Later his private secretary mentioned in conversation that the situation resulting from the shell shortage disclosure and the resignation of Lord Fisher was so serious that the Prime Minister thought the Unionist leaders would have to be consulted on the steps to be taken. I saw from this that the crisis would not be by any means confined to the Admiralty. Mr Asquith asked me to stay and dine, and we had a pleasant evening amid all our troubles. I returned that night to London.

On Monday morning I asked Mr Balfour to come to the Admiralty. I told him Lord Fisher had resigned, and that I understood from the Prime Minister that he would approve the reconstruction of the Board of Admiralty with Sir Arthur Wilson as First Sea Lord. I told him Sir Arthur Wilson was willing to accept office and that all

the other Members of the Board would remain. I said if these arrangements were finally approved by the Prime Minister that afternoon, I would make an immediate announcement to the House of Commons and court a debate.

Mr Balfour was indignant at Lord Fisher's resignation. He said that it would greatly disturb his Unionist friends and that he would himself go and prepare them for it and steady their opinion. Nothing could exceed the kindness and firmness of his attitude. I spent the rest of the morning preparing my statement for Parliament, expecting a severe challenge but also to be successful. I still had no knowledge whatever of the violent political convulsions which were proceeding around me and beneath me.

The Issue in the House of Commons

I went down to the House with the list of my new Board complete, fully prepared to encounter the debate. Before seeing the Prime Minister I looked into the Chancellor of the Exchequer's room. Mr Lloyd George



RECAPTURING THE GUNS

From the drawing by C. Caten Woodville

One result of the German gas attack was the temporary evacuation of a wood on the Canadian left after that flank had been exposed. A battery of 47 guns had perforce to be abandoned for the time being. Before the captured guns could be removed the 10th Bn Canadian Infantry and the 16th Bn Canadian Scottish carried out a counter attack, in the course of which the Germans were driven from the wood at the point of the bayonet and the 47's recaptured.



THE WORK OF THE ROYAL

The officers and men of the Royal Army Service Corps of necessity carry out much of the work of the infantrymen in the trenches. The task of conducting a column of supply waggons and in the picture given here a heavy shell has burst in the middle of a transport column, and as it order and getting the supplies forward is likely to be one of difficulty. In face of incidents with their job and rarely failed to deliver

then made to me the following disclosure. The leaders of the Opposition were in possession of all the facts about the shell shortage and had given notice that they intended to demand a debate. The resignation of Lord Fisher at this juncture created a political crisis. Mr Lloyd George was convinced that this crisis could only be surmounted by the formation of a national Coalition Government. He had accordingly informed the Prime Minister that he would resign unless such a Government were formed at once. I said that he knew I had always been in favour of such a Government and had pressed it at every possible opportunity, but that I hoped now it might be deferred until my Board was reconstituted and in the saddle at the Admiralty. He said action must be immediate.

Interview with the Prime Minister

I then repaired, as had been arranged, to the Prime Minister. He received me with great consideration. I presented him with the list of the new Board. He

said, "No, this will not do. I have decided to form a national Government by a coalition with the Unionists, and a very much larger reconstruction will be required." He told me that Lord Kitchener was to leave the War Office, and then added, after some complimentary remarks, "What are we to do for you?"

I saw at once that it was decided I should leave the Admiralty, and I replied that Mr Balfour could succeed me there with the least break in continuity, that for several months I had made him a party to all our secrets and to everything that was going forward, and that his appointment would be far the best that could be made. The Prime Minister seemed deeply gratified at this suggestion, and I saw that he already had it in his mind. He reverted to the personal question, "Would I take office in the new Government, or would I prefer a command in France?"

At this moment the Chancellor of the Exchequer entered the room. The



From the drawing by Philip Dodd

MY SERVICE CORPS

in the back areas. Frequently however they confront dangers as great as any facing us along shell swept roads is one calling for the highest qualities of courage and leadership likely to be followed by others the task of the officer commanding the column in restoring it as thus all looked upon as in the day's work, the Royal Army Service Corps carried on supplies entrusted to their charge

Prime Minister turned to him. Mr Lloyd George replied, "Why do you not send him to the Colonial Office? There is a great work to be done there." I did not accept this suggestion, and the discussion was about to continue when the door again opened and a secretary entered with the following message for me "Masterton-Smith is on the telephone. Very important news of the kind that never fails has just come in. You must come back to the Admiralty at once." I repeated this information to my two colleagues and quitted them without another word.

Sortie of the High Seas Fleet

It took only five minutes to get to the Admiralty. There I learned that the whole German Fleet was coming out. All its three Battle Squadrons, both Scouting Groups and 70 destroyers were involved. A message from the German Commander-in-Chief to the Fleet contained the phrase "Intend to attack by day." The political crisis and my own fate in it passed almost com-

pletely out of my mind. In the absence of the First Sea Lord, I sent for Admiral Oliver, the Chief of the Staff, and the Second Sea Lord, Sir Frederick Hamilton, and we together issued orders for the Grand Fleet and all other available forces to proceed to sea. I was determined that our whole power should be engaged if battle were joined, and that the enemy's retreat should be intercepted. At 8 o'clock that evening when the complex business of co-ordination had been virtually completed, I telegraphed to Sir John Jellicoe —

It is not impossible that to-morrow may be The Day. All good fortune attend you.

A detailed review of our available strength showed that the position at the moment was exceptionally good. Our margins were everywhere at their maximum. I requested Sir Arthur Wilson and the Second Sea Lord, Sir Frederick Hamilton, to sleep in the Admiralty at my house in order that we might be ready in concert to face the crisis which

the dawn might bring I did not return to the House of Commons but remained continuously in the Admiralty. Late that evening a red box came round from the Prime Minister enclosing a note stating that he had determined to form a Coalition Government and requesting all Ministers to place their resignations in his hands that same night. I complied with this request, adding —

I am strongly in favour of a National Government, and no personal claims or interests should stand in its way at the present crisis. I should be sorry to leave the Admiralty, where I have borne the brunt, but should always rely on you to vindicate my work here.

Having dispatched this, I went to bed. In the morning I had prepared for a Parliamentary ordeal of the most searching character, in the afternoon for a political crisis fatal to myself, in the evening for the supreme battle on the sea. For one day it was enough.

* * * *

The Naval Situation at Dawn on May 18

With the earliest daylight I went down to the War Room. From 3 a.m. onwards our directional stations had begun to pick up the enemy Fleet. The German Fleet Flagship was found to have been in Lat. $53^{\circ} 50' N$, Long. $4^{\circ} 20' E$, at 2.9 a.m. She was thus some 126 miles westward of Heligoland and about 40 miles from Terschelling Island. All the Fleets were at sea. The Grand Fleet with its attendant squadrons and flotillas was hastening to the southward. Commodore Tyrwhitt with the Harwich flotillas, reinforced by the Dover destroyers and supported by eleven submarines, was off the Texel watching the narrow seas. It was only in southern waters that the enemy could strike an effective blow, such as attempting to block Calais or Boulogne. If this were their purpose the Harwich Force could either have attacked them by night, or drawn them into pursuit to the southward by day over a line of submarines. If by any means the German Fleet could be delayed in southern waters, the opportunity would be afforded to the Grand Fleet of blocking their return to

German ports, either off Terschelling or by the eastern route into the Heligoland Bight. The situation after dawn was therefore for some time of the highest interest.

We got no further indication of the enemy's movements till 7 a.m. It then appeared that he had altered course and was steering south-east instead of west. All our faces fell together. Unless he turned again towards us, we should not be able to scoop him into our net. The morning wore on amid confusing indications. At 9 o'clock we learned that the German light cruiser *Dancig* had met with an accident—presumably from a mine—in $50^{\circ} 40' N$, $7^{\circ} 5' E$. Gloom settled on the War Room. This was much nearer the German coast. At last, at about half-past ten, it became certain that the German Fleet was on its way home. It had in fact—as far as we now know—been covering the laying of the minefields on the Dogger Bank which came into existence from this date. This operation being completed, the German Fleet re-entered the Heligoland Bight before our submarines could reach their intercepting position. The episode was over. All our fleets, squadrons and flotillas turned morosely away to resume their long-drawn, unrelenting watch, and I woke again to the political crisis.

Progress of the Political Crisis

But my hour had passed, and during the afternoon, and still more the following day, I learned from a sure source that my position was being viewed with increasing disfavour by those into whose hands power had now fallen. I was not included in their conclaves, which proceeded with the utmost animation from hour to hour. The Unionist leaders on coming to the aid of the nation at this juncture made no conditions as to policy, but stipulated for half the places and patronage. Mr. Asquith had therefore to dispense with half his former colleagues. Those whose actions in the conduct of the war were held to have produced this disagreeable result were naturally the object of resentment in Liberal circles. Up till Monday night it had been determined that Lord

Kitchener should be transferred from the War Office to some great position similar to that of Commander-in-Chief, but on Tuesday it was realized that his hold on the confidence of the nation was still too great for any Government to do without him. On Wednesday, Mr Asquith issued the reassuring statement that both Lord Kitchener and Sir Edward Grey would remain in their respective posts.

On Friday the 21st, when Lord Northcliffe published an attack upon the War Minister of a vehement character, there was a spontaneous movement of public anger in many parts of the country, and the offending newspaper was burned upon the Stock Exchange. In the wake of these emotions it was natural that the vacant Garter should be bestowed upon Lord Kitchener, and he was at the same time awarded the Grand Cordon of the Belgian Order of Leopold. His rehabilitation was therefore complete. I alone was held to blame for all the upheaval and its discontents.

* * * *

Sir Arthur Wilson's Letter

The more serious physical wounds are often surprisingly endurable at the moment they are received. There is an interval of uncertain length before sensation is renewed. The shock numbs but does not paralyse. The wound bleeds but does not smart. So it is also with the great reverses and losses of life. Before I had realized the intensity with which political irritation was being focused on me, I had resigned myself to leaving the Admiralty. But on the Wednesday evening an incident occurred which profoundly affected my feelings and judgment. One of the Sea Lords informed me that Sir Arthur Wilson, who had already provisionally assumed the duties of First Sea Lord, had written to the Prime Minister declining to serve under any First Lord except me.

Sir Arthur Wilson to the Prime Minister

May 19, 1915

DEAR MR ASQUITH,—

In view of the reports in the papers

this morning as to the probable reconstruction of the Government I think I ought to tell you that although I agreed to undertake the office of First Sea Lord under Mr Churchill because it appeared to me to be the best means of maintaining continuity of policy under the unfortunate circumstances that have arisen, I am not prepared to undertake the duties under any new First Lord, as the strain under such circumstances would be far beyond my strength.

Believe me,

Yours truly,

A K WILSON

This utterly unexpected mark of confidence from the old Admiral astounded me. His reserve had been impenetrable. I had no idea how he viewed me and my work. Certainly I never counted on the slightest support or approbation from him.

Vindication

I was greatly disturbed and now found it very hard indeed to leave the Admiralty. In the midst of general condemnation, violent newspaper censures, angry Lobbies, reproachful colleagues, here at any rate was a judge—competent, instructed, impartial—who pronounced by action stronger than words not merely an acquittal but a vindication.

I knew well the profound impression which Sir Arthur Wilson's action, had it been made public, would have produced upon the Naval Service. It would instantly have restored the confidence which press attacks, impossible to answer, had undermined. In no other way could the persistent accusations of rash, ignorant interference by the civilian Minister in the naval conduct of the war be decisively repelled. I felt myself strong enough with this endorsement to carry forward to eventual success the great operations to which we were committed. I felt that working with Wilson and Oliver, the First Sea Lord and the Chief of the Staff linked together as they were, we should again have re-established that unity, comradeship and authority at the summit of the Admiralty with which alone the risks could be run and the

exertions made which were indispensable to victory. The information which had reached me was confidential and could not then be disclosed to the public by me. It was not disclosed by the Prime Minister.

The Italian Declaration of War against Austria

I am confident that had the Prime Minister, instead of submitting to the demand of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to form a Coalition Government, laid the broad outlines of his case, both naval and military, before both Houses of Parliament in Secret Session, he and the policy he was committed to would have been supported by large majorities. The impressive recital of all that the War Office had achieved under Lord Kitchener would greatly have mitigated the complaints on what had been neglected. I am sure I could have vindicated the Admiralty policy. Moreover, on May 23, towering over domestic matters, came the Italian declaration of War against Austria.

The Prime Minister's personal share in this event was a tremendous fact. I am certain that had he fought, he would have won, and had he won, he could then with dignity and with real authority have invited the Opposition to come not to his rescue but to his aid. On such a basis of confidence, comradeship and respect, a true national coalition could have been formed to carry on the war, and Mr Asquith would have been spared that interlude of distrustful colleagues, of divided or more often mutually paralysing counsels and of lost opportunities, which reached its end in December, 1916.

I wish here to record the opinion that Parliament is the foundation upon which Governments should rely, and that the House of Commons in particular has a right to be informed and consulted on all great occasions of political change. The only safe course is that men engaged as members of a Cabinet in an agreed and common policy should stand or fall by a vote of the House of Commons taken after full debate. Departure from these simple fundamental principles led to a disas-

trous breakdown, at a most critical moment, of the whole machinery for carrying on the war. It led to delay in taking urgent action, which delay, as will presently appear, was fatal in its consequences.

* * * *

Lord Fisher's Ultimatum

It was only when Mr Asquith's *Memoirs* appeared in 1928 that Lord Fisher's ultimatum to the Government was made public. Nothing could more clearly, or more cruelly, expose the mental distress and wild excitement into which the strain of war had plunged the old Admiral. Nothing could portray more vividly the volcano upon which I had been living and upon which grave decisions of war and policy had been pursued.

Lord Fisher had written —

"If the following six conditions are agreed to, I can guarantee the successful termination of the war, and the total abolition of the submarine menace.

"I also wish to add that since Lord Ripon wished, in 1885, to make me a Lord of the Admiralty, but at my request made me Director of Naval Ordnance and Torpedoes instead, I have served under nine First Lords and seventeen at the Admiralty, so I ought to know something about it.

"(1) That Mr Winston Churchill is not in the Cabinet to be always circumventing me. Nor will I serve under Mr Balfour.

"(2) That Sir A. K. Wilson leaves the Admiralty, and the Committee of Imperial Defence, and the War Council, as my time will be occupied in resisting the bombardment of Heligoland and other such wild projects. Also his policy is totally opposed to mine, and he accepted the position of First Sea Lord in succession to me, thereby adopting a policy diametrically opposed to my views.

"(3) That there shall be an entire new Board of Admiralty as regards the Sea Lords and the Financial Secretary (who is utterly useless). New measures demand New Men.

"(4) That I should have complete

professional charge of the war at sea, together with the sole disposition of the Fleet and the appointment of all officers of all ranks whatsoever

"(5) That the First Lord of the Admiralty should be absolutely restricted to Policy and Parliamentary Procedure, and should occupy the same position towards me as Mr Tennant, M.P., does to Lord Kitchener (and very well he does it)

"(6) That I should have the sole absolute authority for all new construction and all dockyard work of whatever sort whatsoever, and complete control over the whole of the Civil Establishments of the Navy
(Initialled) F

1915

"P.S.—The 60 per cent of my time and energy which I have exhausted on nine First Lords in the past I wish in the future to devote to the successful prosecution of the war. That is the sole reason for these six conditions. These six conditions must be published verbatim so that the Fleet may know my position

It is needless to say that this amazing document was answered only by the curt acceptance of Fisher's resignation

* * * *

Formation of the First Coalition Government

The formation of the new Government proceeded haltingly. Although by what was naïvely called a "Self-

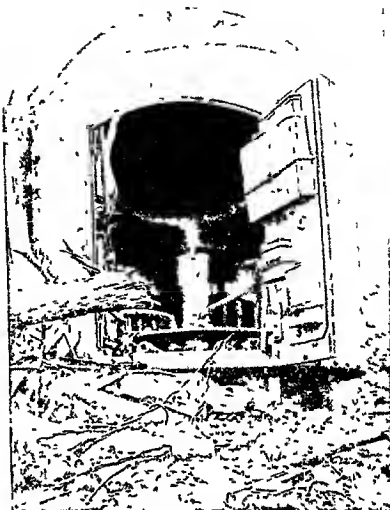


Photo Copyright

THE FORERUNNER OF THE 'PILL-BOX'

In the early days of the war certain of the German trenches were strengthened at intervals by the erection of armoured casemates from which light guns were fired. As the war progressed the idea was developed until the whole front was studded with similar erections constructed of reinforced concrete and employed as shelters for machine gun crews. These pill-boxes, as they were called, presented a stiff problem to attacking infantry, as they were difficult to destroy by artillery fire and the crews within were able to man their guns to the last.

"Denying Ordnance" it was agreed between the party leaders that no Member of Parliament on either side who was serving at the Front should be included in the Administration, the adjustment of party and personal claims raised at numerous points obstinate difficulties. Though I was left alone at the Admiralty, I was fully informed of every phase in this intricate and by no means entirely edifying process. It is no part of my purpose to unfold these matters here; their chronicle may be safely left to the Grevilles and Crokers, or which posterity, and possibly even

our own generation, are not likely to be destitute

A Visit of Ceremony

It was during this interval that I had the honour of receiving a visit of ceremony from Lord Kitchener. I was not at first aware of what it was about. We had differed strongly and on a broad front at the last meeting of the War Council. Moreover, no decision of any importance on naval and military affairs could be taken during the hiatus. We talked about the situation. After some general remarks he asked me whether it was settled that I should leave the Admiralty. I said it was. He asked what I was going to do. I said I had no idea, nothing was settled. He spoke very kindly about our work together. He evidently had no idea how narrowly he had escaped my fate. As he got up to go he turned and said, in the impressive and almost majestic manner which was natural to him, "Well, there is one thing at any rate they cannot take from you. The Fleet was ready." After that he was gone. During the months that we were still to serve together in the new Cabinet I was condemned often to differ from him, to oppose him and to criticize him. But I cannot forget the rugged kindness and warm-hearted courtesy which led him to pay me this visit.

Sir Arthur Wilson's Refusal

By the 21st it was decided that Mr Balfour was to come to the Admiralty. In accordance with what I knew were the Prime Minister's wishes, I endeavoured to persuade Sir Arthur Wilson to serve under him. He remained obdurate. No arguments would move him. He was at some pains to explain that his decision arose out of no personal consideration for me, but solely because he felt he could not undertake the burden without my aid. All the same, there seemed to be a quite unwonted element of friendliness in his demeanour, and this was proved a year later during the Parliamentary inquiry into the Dardanelles. Not only did he then give evidence which was of the greatest possible assistance to me, but

he drew up in a single night a cogent paper on the technical gunnery aspects of the plan we had followed, and cast hisegis and authority over an enterprise which everybody was by then eager to condemn.

On the evening of the 21st I reported to the Prime Minister —

"I have tried very hard but without success to persuade Sir Arthur Wilson to hold himself at Mr Balfour's disposition. In these circumstances I would advise Sir Henry Jackson."

This proposal was adopted, and meanwhile the process of Cabinet-making gradually completed itself. Mr Asquith was good enough to offer me the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster. This office is a sinecure of much dignity. I should certainly not have felt able to accept it but for the fact that he coupled with it the promise that I should be a member of the War Council, or War Committee, of the Cabinet. I felt that thus situated I should be able to bring whatever knowledge I had acquired to the service of the Dardanelles expedition, and that it was my duty to aid and succour it by any effective means still left to me. I remained in the new Government so long as this condition was observed.

It was not till the 26th that the full list of the Government was announced and Ministers changed offices and kissed hands. The interval was full of anxiety. No councils were held on war matters and all questions of policy had necessarily to be reserved for the decision of the new Cabinet. No more troops were sent to the Dardanelles, and only day-to-day decisions could be taken. There was no First Sea Lord. In these circumstances I did the best I could.

My Letter to Mr Balfour

Early on the morning of the 26th—my last at the Admiralty—arrived the sinister news that the *Triumph* had been torpedoed and sunk at the Dardanelles by a German submarine. However, my task was over, and before setting out for Buckingham Palace I wrote the following letter to the states-

man on whom the burden of Admiralty affairs was now placed —

Mr Churchill to Mr Balfour

May 26, 1915

I leave you one task of great difficulty which requires your immediate attention, viz the protection of the Dardanelles fleet against submarine attack. Do not underrate the gravity of this danger. Unless it can be coped with, there are no limits to the evil consequences. For nearly a fortnight I have not had the authority to make important decisions. Your fresh mind and calm judgment will give the impulse which is necessary. I set out the following notes for what they are worth —

1 The military operations should proceed with all possible speed, so that the period of danger may be shortened. Whatever force is necessary, can be spared and can be used, should be sent at once, and all at once.

2 Until decisive operations on land can be resumed, the Fleet must remain in the safety of Mudros harbour—or the Suez Canal. Such ships as are required to cover the troops should, until the netted lighters arrive, be protected by colliers and empty transports lashed alongside.

3 As soon as possible ships must be provided which are immune from torpedo attack. As specified in my minute of the 13th instant to the First Sea Lord, the nine heavy monitors should go out as soon as each is ready, and the four "Edgars" which have been fitted with bulges, and which supply the medium battery for bombarding purposes, should be sent at once. Nearly a fortnight has been lost in regard to the "Edgars" by the interregnum here. Until these vessels arrive, and while no decisive land operations are in progress, the exposure of ships should be kept to the absolute minimum.

4 At least 100 trawlers and drifters, with 100 miles of indicator net, and eight more destroyers (which should on the way out escort transports) should be sent, in addition to all the other measures which have been taken, and of which you will be told.

5 The protection against submarines must take the form of developing a great netted area around the tip of the Gallipoli Peninsula, occupied by large numbers of armed trawlers and sea-planes always ready. I want to emphasize the fact that action must be drastic and on a large scale. Much has been done already.

6 The measures to watch and net the mouth of the Adriatic, and to search for submarine bases in Asia Minor, to mine-in likely bases, to develop a system of intelligence regardless of expense, all of which are now in progress, must be pressed forward.

7 Punishment must be doggedly borne.

From the bottom of my heart I wish you success in this and all other anxious business which has been thrust upon you, and which you have so loyally and courageously undertaken.

* * * *

I Leave the Admiralty

Thus ended my administration of the Admiralty. For thirty-four months of preparation and ten months of war I had borne the prime responsibility and had wielded the main executive power. The reader who has persevered thus far in this account will realize the difficulties that were coped with, the hazards that were encountered, the mistakes that were made, and the work that was done. Doubtless years, many misfortunes, enormous toils, bitter disappointments, still lay before the Royal Navy. But I am entitled at this point in the story to place on record the situation and condition in which the mighty instrument of our sea power and of our salvation passed into the hands of my successors.

The Naval Position

At no moment during all the wars of Britain had our command of the seas been more complete, and in no previous war had that command been asserted more rapidly or with so little loss. Not only had the surface ships of the enemy been extirpated from the oceans of the world, not only in the North Sea had his fleets

and squadrons been beaten, cowed and driven into port, but even the new and barbarous submarine warfare had been curbed and checked. For more than a year to come the German High Seas Fleet scarcely quitted its harbours, and even when they did so, it was with no intention of fighting a battle and in the unfounded hope that they could return unperceived or unmolested. For eighteen months their submarine campaign was virtually suspended. In spite of modern complications, the economic blockade of Germany was established and maintained, so far as it rested with the Navy, with the utmost strictness; scarcely any ship that the Navy had authority to touch ever passed our far-spread cordons.

The maintenance of the armies in France and in the east proceeded every month on a vaster scale, without the slightest substantial hindrance upon their communications becoming apparent to our commanders at the Front. The mercantile fleets of Britain and her allies moved with freedom in all directions about the seas and oceans, and an insurance rate of 1 per cent left a substantial profit to the Government Fund. These conditions lasted during all the year 1915 and up to the last quarter of the year 1916. There never was in all the history of war such an unchallenged reign of sea power.

The Inheritance

Meanwhile the British Navy was growing continually and rapidly in strength. The fruits of the exertions which had been made before and since the outbreak of the war were being reaped with each successive month. Battleships, battle-cruisers, light cruisers in dozens, submarines in scores, destroyers in hundreds, small craft in thousands, were being armed and built, and were coming into commission in an unceasing and broadening tide.

The manning arrangements to meet this enormous new construction were perfected for a year in advance. Every requirement known to the naval science of the day in guns, in torpedoes,

in shells, in explosives, in propellant, in coal, in oil, and in auxiliary services had been foreseen and provided for in harmonious relation to the expansion of our naval power.

At the Admiralty we were in hot pursuit of most of the great key inventions and ideas of the war, and this long in advance of every other nation, friend or foe. Tanks, smoke, torpedo-seaplanes, directional wireless, cryptography, mine tenders, monitors, torpedo-proof ships, paravanes—all were being actively driven forward or developed. Poison gas alone we had put aside—but not from want of comprehension. Even for the new submarine campaign, not to burst upon us for nearly eighteen months, the principal safeguarding measures had already been devised: the multitudes of vessels were building, the decoy ships were at work.

Great Naval Leaders

Moreover the true war leaders of the Navy had already emerged from the ranks of peace-time men, and in Beatty, Keyes, Tyrwhitt, Pakenham, and I must add Lewis Bayly—though under a temporary cloud—we had masters of the storm capable of rivaling upon the seas and against the enemy's coasts the exploits of the famous sailor figures of the past. There remained only to devise and perfect those schemes of naval offensive which in spite, and indeed by means of, modern science and invention would have liberated the pent-up skill and daring of our officers and men. There was also at hand that prolonged interlude of ease and tranquillity upon salt water in which every plan could be worked out with sure and deliberate study.

From all this reward and opportunity Fisher, by his own impulsive fatal act, and I, through causes which these pages expose, were for ever disinherited. We lingered on, helpless spectators, until the period of halcyon weather came fearfully to an end and the very life of the State was plunged again into supreme hazard on the seas.

CHAPTER L

THE DARKENING SCENE

A Defective War Instrument—First Meeting of the Dardanelles Committee—A Belated Decision—Duality of Opinion—Consequences of Delay—On the Gallipoli Peninsula—Action of June 4—Action of June 23—Failure of the Supply of British Drifts—Scarcity of Artillery Ammunition—Admiral von Usedom's Reports to the German Emperor—Measures Against the U-Boat Attack—British Submarines in the Marmora—Exploits and Adventures—Nasmith and Boyle—The Niagara Anti-Submarine Net—Twenty-Seven Epic Voyages—The Turkish Sea Communication Cut—The Actual Facts—A Misleading Telegram

THE new Administration met for the first time on May 26

A Defective War Instrument

From the very outset its defects as a war-making instrument were evident. The old Ministers had made an accommodation with their political opponents not on their merits but under duress. The new Ministers were deeply prejudiced against the work which their predecessors had done. Had they been responsible they would no doubt have made a somewhat different series of mistakes. The Unionists had little confidence in the Prime Minister. Indeed, one of the questions they had most anxiously debated was whether they would assent to his remaining at the head of the Government. Mr Lloyd George, the powerful politician whose action had compelled the formation of the Coalition, found himself on the morrow of his success in a position of singular weakness. He had ceded the Exchequer to Mr McKenna, and found in the new Cabinet, so largely his creation, an array of Conservative notables who regarded his political record with the utmost aversion.

Mr Bonar Law, the Leader of the Conservative Party in the House of Commons, might well have expected this dominant post, and although he was not himself affected by personal considerations, much soreness remained among his friends. Whereas practically all the important matters connected

with the war had been dealt with in the late Government by four or five Ministers, at least a dozen powerful, capable, distinguished personalities who were in a position to assert themselves had now to be consulted.

The progress of business therefore became cumbrous and laborious in the last degree, and though all these evils were corrected by earnest patriotism and loyalty, the general result was bound to be disappointing. Those who had knowledge had passed to defend, those free from war commitments were also free from war experience. At least five or six different opinions prevailed on every great topic, and every operative decision was obtained only by prolonged, discursive and exhausting discussions. Far more often we laboured through long delays to unsatisfactory compromises. Meanwhile the destroying war strode remorselessly on its course.

Although without executive power, I was treated with much consideration by the new Cabinet. I continued to sit in my old place on Lord Kitchener's left hand. I was nominated to serve on the committee of nine Ministers which, under the title of the Dardanelles Committee, was virtually the old War Council. I was invited to prepare statements on the situation, both naval and general, and every facility was placed at my disposal by the Admiralty for marshalling and checking the facts. Lord Kitchener was also desired to

present to the new Cabinet similar statements from the War Office standpoint. These papers were prepared with the utmost dispatch.

First Meeting of the Dardanelles Committee

Meanwhile the education of the new Ministers in the inside and central point of view and their initiation in the secret and special information at the disposal of the Government continued. Opinion declared itself increasingly favourable to the prosecution of the enterprise at the Dardanelles and generally in the sense of the views which I had set forth on the military problem. It was not, however, until the afternoon of June 7 that the first meeting of the Dardanelles Committee was convened. It was composed of—The Prime Minister, Lord Kitchener, Lord Lansdowne, Mr Bonar Law, Mr Balfour, Lord Curzon, Lord Selborne, Lord Crewe and myself.

Mr Lloyd George, though a member, was not present on this occasion. Indeed from this time forward and for some months he immersed himself in the production of munitions, and concentrated his whole energies upon the task.

The Committee addressed itself to the requests for reinforcements contained in Sir Ian Hamilton's telegram of May 17. Lord Kitchener pronounced with the utmost decision in favour of prosecuting the campaign at the Dardanelles with the greatest vigour. He declared that he would reinforce Sir Ian Hamilton with three divisions of the New Army in addition to the Lowland Territorial Division, which had already been dispatched under orders issued before the interregnum. He stated that he could not consent to remain responsible for the conduct of the war if it were decided to abandon the attack upon the Gallipoli Peninsula. The Council accepted this clear guidance not merely with relief but with satisfaction. Opinion was unanimous. The following conclusions were recorded—

"1 To reinforce Sir Ian Hamilton with the three remaining divisions of

the First New Army with a view to an assault in the second week of July.

"2 To send out the following naval units, which should be much less vulnerable to submarine attack than those under Admiral de Robeck's command—

"*Endymion* and *Theseus* (light cruisers of the 'Edgar' class just fitted with bulges)

"Four monitors with 14-inch guns

"Six monitors with 9 2-inch guns

"Four monitors with 6-inch guns, and one of the latter to follow later

"Four sloops

"Two 'E' Class submarines, now in route

"Four 'H' Class submarines"

A Belated Decision

Thus the naval measures decided on by the new Board of Admiralty and the new War Council were in principle the same, slightly extended, as those which had been previously pressed by me upon Lord Fisher on the eve of his resignation. The military decisions were, however, on a far larger scale than any which Lord Kitchener had countenanced hitherto. Besides the two divisions which it was in contemplation to send on May 17 and May 30 respectively (one of which had already gone), two others were added, and of the four divisions so assigned to Sir Ian Hamilton, three were to be divisions of the New Army, which was considered, perhaps unjustly, superior to the Territorial divisions at this period.

The conclusions of the Dardanelles Committee of June 7 were brought before the Cabinet on the 9th, and a very hot discussion arose on the general principle of whether the Dardanelles enterprise should be persevered in, or whether we should "cut our loss" and come away. This was, in fact, going over the whole process by which the Dardanelles Committee had arrived at their conclusions. The sense of the Cabinet on the whole was however clearly with the Committee, and in the end it was agreed that the three divisions should go as reinforcements to Sir Ian Hamilton.



Photo Captain C. Jackson, A.F.C.,
late A.I.F. and R.A.F.

IN A TRENCH AT ANZAC

This picture of officers and other ranks at Anzac has been included to show the type of trench common everywhere on Gallipoli. Trench furniture such as duck-boards, timber revetments, timber iron or concrete dugouts were rarely seen. Sandbags, however, there were in plenty, and these combined with the firm nature of the soil enabled a sound type of trench to be constructed which endured well so long as dry weather obtained.

Duality of Opinion

There was however from the outset to the end a duality of opinion in the Cabinet which, although it did not follow party lines, resembled a party cleavage, and at every stage in the rest of the Dardanelles operations caused serious embarrassment. Had the Prime Minister possessed or been able to acquire plenary authority, and had he been permitted to exercise it during May and June without distraction or interruption, it is my belief, based upon

daily acquaintance with these transactions, that he would have taken the measures which even at this stage would have resulted in securing a decisive victory. But from the moment of the formation of the Coalition power was dispersed and counsels were divided and every military decision had to be carried by the same sort of process of tact, temporizing, and exhaustion which occurs over a clause in a keenly contested Bill in the House of Commons in time of peace. These facts



*Photo Captain C. Jackson, A.F.C.,
late A.I.F., and R.A.F.*

STEEL LOOPHOLE PLATE

As has been commented upon earlier in this account the marksmanship of both Turks and the Imperial forces during the Gallipoli campaign was of a high order. Casual firing over the sandbagged parapet was suicidal. In consequence of this shell loophole plates were in common use and were instrumental in saving many lives. The specimen shown above bears the marks of many Turkish bullets and it is obvious that an Australian sniper firing without this protection, would speedily have lost his life.

are stated not with a view of making reproaches where all were equally sincere and equally well-meaning, but to explain the melancholy turn of events.

We had now at length got on June 9 the kind of decisions which were necessary to carry the enterprise through to success. There was no *military* reason of any kind why the decisions which were reached on June 7 and June 9 should not have been taken within forty-eight hours of Sir Ian Hamilton's telegram of May 17. All the facts necessary to the decision were equally available on that date, all the troops were equally available, all the arguments were equally clamant. But from causes in which the enemy had no part, which arose solely from the con-

fusion into which the governing instrument in this country had been thrown, from a fortnight to three weeks were lost for ever.

Consequences of Delay

The consequences were momentous. Time was the dominating factor. The extraordinary mobility and unexpectedness of amphibious power can, as has been shown, only be exerted in strict relation to limited periods of time. The surprise, the rapidity, and the intensity of the attack

are all dependent on the state of the enemy's preparations at a given moment. Every movement undertaken on one side can be matched by a counter-movement on the other. Force and time in this kind of operation amount to almost the same thing, and each can to a very large extent be expressed in terms of the other. A week lost was about the same as a division. Three divisions in February could have occupied the Gallipoli Peninsula with little fighting. Five could have captured it after March 18. Seven were insufficient at the end of April, but nine might just have done it. Eleven might have sufficed at the beginning of July. Fourteen were to prove insufficient on August 7. Moreover, one delay breeds another.

The date of the next great attack on the Gallipoli Peninsula was governed by two factors—the arrival of the new army, and to a lesser extent by the state of the moon. It was considered that a surprise landing at a fresh point could best be effected on a moonless night. It therefore the dark period of July was missed, the operation in the particular form adopted must stand over till the similar period in August.

It will be seen by reference to the decisions of the Dar-

danelles Committee on June 7 that they contemplated an attack in the second week of July, and believed that the three new divisions would all have arrived by then. This would have been the most favourable moment. It could certainly have been achieved if the decision had been taken promptly on the receipt of Sir Ian Hamilton's telegram, or, if pending a general decision on policy, the dispatch of reinforcements by divisions could have proceeded while the Government were considering the matter.

But as it was, the troops that it was now decided to send did not or could not arrive in time for a July attack. The three New Army divisions did not, in fact, finish arriving until



Photo. Captain C. J. Lee, I.F.C., late V.I.V., and K.I.I.

MEN OF AN INDIAN MOUNTAIN BATTERY

Mountain artillery batteries saw much service during the Gallipoli, Sinai and Palestine campaigns in all of which they rendered gallant service. Mountain batteries are normally equipped with light pieces of ordnance which can be rapidly taken to pieces and transported on mule transport. They are of special value, as their name implies in hilly country, being able to establish themselves in positions which the heavier guns could not reach.

This photograph was taken during the operations at Anzac Cove in 1915.

July had ended. Thus the great battle at Anzac and Suvla Bay was fought in the second week of August, instead of, as would have been perfectly practicable, in the early part of July. During the month that was thus lost, i.e. from the beginning of July to the beginning of August, ten new Turkish divisions, or their equivalents, besides important drafts, according to our now certain knowledge, reached the defenders of the Peninsula, and thus our new divisions, which we had at last decided to send, and which if sent in time would have given us a good superiority, were equated and cancelled out before they got to the spot. Moreover, in the interval our land forces were greatly wasted and reduced by sickness.

and casualties, and the Fleet was exposed to continuous danger from submarines

The Germans acquired an ever-increasing control of the Turkish Army, and the whole methods of defence were in consequence far better organized. The defeats of the Russians in Galicia during June and July produced a marked change in the fighting spirit of the Turks on the Peninsula. The removal from Batoum of General Istomine's army, which was thrown into the main Russian battlefields, liberated the considerable forces which the Turks had been forced to keep concentrated at or near Midia to guard against a landing there. Before June was half over it became clear that the reinforcements could not reach the Dardanelles in time for a July battle. The second week in August was the earliest date when the troops would be there, and the nights would be moonless.

All these considerations were present in my mind and filled me with intense anxiety about the issue of the next great effort. I therefore laboured by every means open to me to secure even larger reinforcements and above all accelerated dispatch.

* * * *

On the Gallipoli Peninsula

While Ministerial changes and Cabinet discussions had been taking place at home, the situation at the Dardanelles and on the Gallipoli Peninsula had passed through several critical phases. On May 19 the Turks, having received news of the arrival of German submarines, made a most determined and serious effort to drive the Anzacs into the sea. The attack, in which four divisions comprising 30,000 Turkish infantry took part, was maintained for many hours both in darkness and in daylight. It was completely and decisively repulsed at every point. When it ceased the Turks had lost at least 5,000 men, and 3,000 of their dead lay in front of the Anzac trenches. The British loss, on the other hand, did not exceed 600. On the morning the Turkish Commander asked for an armistice to bury the dead and collect

the wounded, and this was conceded by Sir Ian Hamiton.

"After May 19," said the Turkish War Office when the war was over, "it was realised that the British defence at Anzac was too strong to enable us to effect anything against it without heavy artillery with plenty of ammunition, and since our own position was also very strong in defence, two weak divisions were left in the trenches and the other two were withdrawn."

The position at Anzac was henceforward unchallenged.

Action of June 4

On June 4 a general attack was delivered by the British and French along the whole front at Helles. In this action the 29th Division, the 42nd Division, the 2nd Naval Brigade and both French Divisions took part. The Allied forces numbered about 34,000 infantry and the Turks 25,000. Despite a woeful deficiency in artillery and ammunition, the British troops stormed the trenches of the Turkish centre. The French gained ground on the right, but were afterwards driven back by counter-attacks. This exposed the flank of the Naval and 42nd Divisions who were in succession compelled to yield up the greater part of their gains. In the end the general line of the Allies was advanced by no more than two or three hundred yards.

The battle was costly for both sides. The Turkish losses amounted to 10,000, and those of the British alone to an equal number. As in all the battles on the Peninsula, the issue hung in a trembling balance. The Turks were thrown into such confusion that on only two kilometres of their front no less than twenty-five battalions (or parts of battalions) were mingled in the line without any higher organization. In these straits the Turkish Divisional Commander reported that no further British attack could be resisted. In a heated conference the Turkish Chief-of-the-Staff advised the withdrawal of the whole front to Ach Baba. It was only with the greatest difficulty and by the enemy's good luck that the intermingled troops were re-

lieved by a fresh Turkish division on the night of June 7

On June 21 another important action was fought by the French Corps, which attacked with great spirit on the right of the Helles Front, captured the Haricot Redoubt, and made a substantial advance. A portion of these gains were wrested from them the next day by a Turkish counter-attack.

Action of June 28

A week later, June 28, the British being reinforced by the 52nd Division, made a general attack on the left of the Helles Front. Five lines of trenches were captured, and an advance of about 1,000 yards was secured. The Turkish force engaged comprised 38,000 infantry with 16 field and 7 heavy batteries. The fire of the ships was, on this occasion, found to be most effective, and the success of the attack again led to critical discussions at the Turkish Headquarters. The German General, Weber, now commanding the southern zone, wished to withdraw the whole front to the Kild Bahr Plateau. Liman von Sanders, however, overruled him and demanded instead a speedy counter-attack. For this purpose, two fresh Turkish divisions were brought into the line, and a fierce surprise assault was delivered before dawn on July 5. The Turks were repulsed with a loss of 6,000 men.

Failure of the Supply of British Drafts

"The affair of the 28th," said General Callwell in his cool and instructed account of the Campaign,¹ "following closely Gouraud's stroke on the opposite flank, seemed to suggest that if there had been a plentiful reserve to throw into the scale at this juncture on the Helles Front, this might have proved the psychological moment for initiating a determined effort to secure Krithia, the high ground beyond that coveted village, and even possibly Achi Baba itself, no such reserves were, however, available." The paralysis of the British Executive during the formation of the Coalition Government

¹ Major General Sir C. E. Callwell *The Dardanelles* p. 160

and the education of its new Ministers had effectually withheld this boon.

A third attack along the whole front was delivered with such ammunition and troops as could be found on July 12-13. The general line was advanced from 200 to 400 yards, but no important results were obtained. It had been evident from the beginning of July that considerable reinforcements were reaching the Turks. On the other hand, the British Army was woefully reduced by wastage and casualties. Already by the middle of May, after the first battles, the infantry of Sir Ian Hamilton's five divisions were 23,000 men, or 40 per cent below their war establishment. These deficiencies were never overtaken by the drafts supplied by the War Office. The 52nd Division and various minor reinforcements dribbled in during June, but did little more than keep pace with the wastage. While the new divisions were on the sea, the old divisions were dwindling. During the whole of May, June and July, the total of the British Forces on the Peninsula and at Anzac never exceeded 60,000 men.

Scarcity of Artillery Ammunition

Even more discouraging than depleted battalions was the scarcity of ammunition. "During the months of June and July," said General Simpson-Baillie—who commanded the British Artillery¹—"the total number of rounds of 18-pdr ammunition at Cape Helles never reached 25,000. Before one of our attacks it used to reach its maximum, which was about 19,000 to 23,000. The total amount of 18-pdr therefore was limited to about 12,000 rounds, as it was necessary to keep 6,000 to 10,000 rounds in reserve to guard against Turkish counter-attacks. As there was no high explosive shell for the 18-pdr (except 6,10 rounds expended on June 4) only shrapnel could be used, and it is well-known that shrapnel is but little use for destroying hostile trenches." On July 13 only 5,000 rounds for the field artillery remained at Helles, and all active operations had, perforce, to be suspended.

¹ *Gallipoli Diary* Appendix I, 281, Statement of Major General Simpson-Baillie

The weight of field-gun ammunition available to prepare and support the British assaults in any of these battles on the Peninsula never exceeded 150 tons. For the purpose of judging the scale of the artillery preparation, this may be compared with over 1,300 tons fired in the first two days of the battle of Loos at the end of September in the same year, and with upwards of 25,000 tons often fired in two days during the August offensive of 1918. The rifle and machine-gun fire of the defence on each occasion remained a constant

factor. Hard tasks were therefore set to the troops in Gallipoli, and the fact that the issue hung continually in the balance is the measure of their bravery and devotion.

* * * *

Admiral von Usedom's Reports to the German Emperor

The fact that during all this period the British Fleet neither attacked nor threatened the forts at the Narrows nor attempted to sweep the minefields enabled the German and Turkish Commanders to draw upon the medium and mobile artillery which defended the Straits for the purpose of succouring the Fifth Turkish Army in its desperate struggle. The first transferences began on April 27. On May 23 Admiral von Usedom, who on April 26 had assumed command of the Fortress of the Dardanelles and of all the Marine Defences of the Straits, reported to the Emperor that he had up to that date, under protest, already yielded to the Army the following artillery —

Six 8 2-inch mortars, eight 6-inch field howitzers, two 4 7-inch quick-firing field howitzers, nine 4 7-inch field howitzers, twelve 4 7-inch siege guns, and twelve field guns. In all forty-nine pieces.

During June and July the Fifth Turkish Army in its distress made ever-increasing inroads upon the artillery defence of the Straits. Admiral von Usedom's letters to the Emperor reveal his anxiety at this denudation of the marine artillery, and also the dire need of German ammunition, not only for the fortress system, but also for the Fifth Army. "Without ammunition from Germany," he wrote, "the army could hold the enemy only a short time, Turkey must spare no effort to get German ammunition through the Balkan countries."

These efforts met with no success and on August 16 Admiral von Usedom reported to the Emperor that "the attempts of bringing ammunition ordered in Germany through Roumania have all failed." He was therefore forced to endure his precarious situation month after month. It must, how-



Photo. Pollock

THE 'REST CAMP' HELLES, 1915

This photograph probably the only one of its kind shows the degree of comfort to be expected by troops sent back from the trenches to rest. The rest-camp area consisted of long lines of grave-like excavations, each large enough to give cover to one man when lying down. The lines of 'graves' were sited parallel to the Turkish lines on Achü Baba, and when shells from that quarter came over—a frequent occurrence—men were seen diving into their holes like so many rabbits. Nevertheless this system of protection was a good one and saved many lives. The situation of this camp was to the left of and just outside the picture shown on the page opposite.

ever, be observed that whereas the Turkish shortage of ammunition arose from causes beyond their control, the British shortage sprang solely from lack of decision in the distribution of the available quantities between the various theatres of war

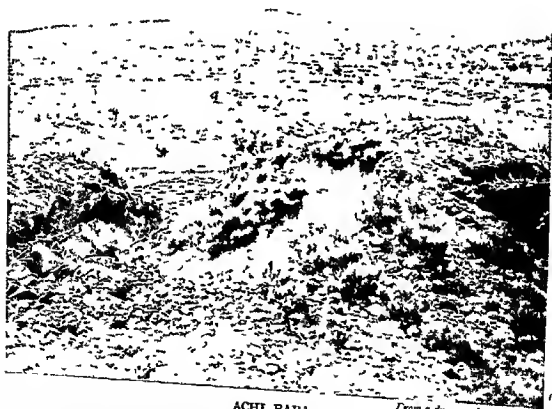
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Measures against the U-Boat Attack

The measures taken to cope with the German submarine attack upon our communications proved, broadly speak-

ing, completely successful. The Fleet was kept in the shelter of Mudros harbour, battleships were only exposed when required for some definite operation, and the ordinary support of the army by fire from the sea was afforded during June by destroyers and light vessels

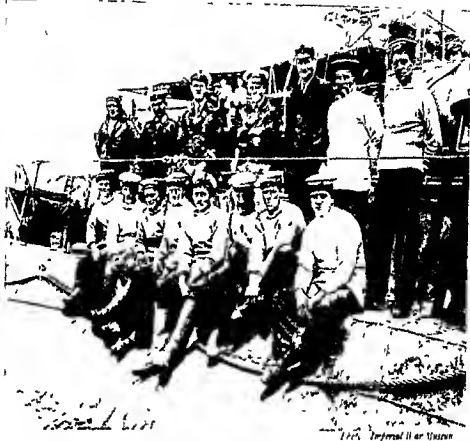
This was found to be sufficient. The observation and direction of the ships' fire attained every week a higher efficiency. This process continued steadily until naval co-operation in land



ACHI BABA

From a drawing by Lascelles

The country at Cape Helles between the beaches and the celebrated hill, Achı Baba, was gently undulating. The southern portion was somewhat spoon shaped and in the hollow of the spoon were the rest camps. To the north of the rest area there was a gentle rise to the slopes of Achı Baba itself. Unfortunately for the British and French forces nearly the whole of the area which they occupied could be observed from Achı Baba. In consequence of this troops resting could be harassed at will by gunfire from the Turkish position on Achı Baba or by enfilade from the vicinity of Kum Kale on the Asiatic shore.



LIEUT.-COMMANDER HOLBROOK AND THE CREW OF B-11

Lieut.-Commander Holbrook had the distinction of receiving the first V.C. awarded to the Navy during the Great War. He is seen here third from the left in the top row, shortly after returning from his exploit at the Dardanelles, in the course of which he dived his submarine, the B-11, beneath five rows of mines and torpedoed the Turkish battleship *Messudieh*, returning safely to his base.

fighting on Gallipoli had become a factor of the utmost value. In July, the monitors and "bulged" cruisers began to arrive. Thenceforward the fire of the Turkish guns from Asia was controlled and largely quelled. The four large monitors armed with 14-inch guns, four medium monitors armed with 9.2 or 6-inch guns, and four "bulged" cruisers (*Theseus*, *Endymion*, *Grafton* and *Edgar*) were all on the scene by the end of that month. Had action been taken when it was first proposed to Lord Fisher, the arrival of these vessels would have been antedated by more than three weeks. But the interval was passed without serious disadvantage to the army, and when the whole Monitor Fleet had arrived, the naval support of the troops was not only fully restored, but much enhanced.

Meanwhile the supply of the army

was maintained by the use of large numbers of small shallow-draught vessels and proceeded uninterruptedly, so that by the middle of July reserves of twenty-four days' rations had been accumulated for all troops ashore at Helles and Anzac. The reinforcements sent from home were conveyed to their destination, although several transports were torpedoed, and in one case a thousand lives were lost. It is remarkable that neither monitors, "bulged" cruisers, nor shallow-draught vessels were ever seriously attacked or threatened by submarines. Lastly, the great netted areas proved an effective deterrent against submarine attack. Although warships of every kind were continually moving about within them, they were in no case molested during the whole of the campaign. Thus, what had seemed to be a danger potentially mortal was entirely warded

off by suitable measures perseveringly applied on a sufficient scale

British Submarines in the Marmora

While the submarine attack upon the British sea communications was being frustrated, a far more effective pressure was being brought to bear upon the enemy. In December, 1914, Lieutenant-Commander Norman Holbrook had gained the Victoria Cross by diving his submarine B 11 under the minefields of the Dardanelles and sinking the Turkish cruiser *Messudieh*. On April 17 this desperate enterprise had been again attempted by submarine E 15 in conjunction with Sir Ian Hamilton's impending landing. The effort failed. The vessel ran aground in the Straits near Dardanos, her Captain, Lieutenant-Commander T S Brodie, was killed, most of her crew were captured and her carcass, after being fiercely contended for, was finally shattered by a torpedo from a British picket boat.

On April 25, while the landing was in progress, the Australian submarine AE 2, undeterred by the fate of her forerunner, most gallantly and skilfully dived through

and under the minefields and succeeded in entering the Sea of Marmora. Here from the 25th to the 30th she attacked the Turkish shipping and sank a large gunboat. On April 30, however, being damaged and unable to dive properly, she was herself sunk, after a two hours' fight, by a Turkish torpedo boat. But the way had been re-opened. The passage, whatever its perils, was shown to be still not impossible.

Exploits and Adventures

The losses of these two boats, which so greatly disturbed Lord Fisher, did not prevent a sublime perseverance

On April 27, E 14 under Lieutenant-Commander C Boyle, dived at 95 feet through the minefield, passed Kilid Bahr at 22 feet under the fire of all the forts and torpedoed a Turkish gunboat near Gallipoli. From this time forward, till the end, one or more British submarines continuously operated in the Sea of Marmora, and their attacks upon the Turkish water communications, almost by themselves achieved the ruin of the enemy.

E 14 remained in the Sea of Marmora from April 27 to

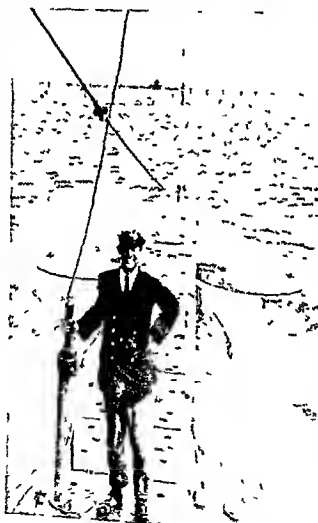


Photo Imperial War Museum
LIEUT. COMMANDER C BOYLE, V.C.

Another naval officer who greatly distinguished himself Lieutenant-Commander Boyle navigated his submarine E 14, under the minefield in the Dardanelles diving to a depth of 95 feet. In spite of heavy fire from the Turkish forts this officer succeeded in torpedoing a Turkish gunboat near Gallipoli. In addition to this the E 14 remained in the Sea of Marmora for nearly three weeks during which as described in the text she inflicted heavy losses upon the Turks.

May 18, continually hunted by torpedo boats and other patrol craft, and fired on so constantly that she could scarcely find breathing space to recharge her batteries and keep herself alive. Nevertheless she wrought decisive havoc on the Turkish transports. On the 29th she attacked two and sank one. On May 1 she sank a gunboat. On May 5 she attacked another transport and drove others back to Constantinople. On the 10th she attacked two transports conveyed by two Turkish destroyers and fired at both. The second transport was a very large vessel, full of troops, a terrific explosion followed the impact of the torpedo, and the transport sank rapidly. An entire infantry brigade and several batteries of artillery, in all upwards of 6,000 Turkish soldiers, were drowned. This awful event practically arrested the movement of Turkish troops by sea. E 14 had now no torpedoes, and on May 17 she received wireless orders to return. On the 18th she again ran the gauntlet of the forts at 22 feet, and dived, as she thought, under the minefields. She must, however, have passed right through the lines of mines in extreme danger.

Nasmith and Boyle

Commander Nasmith in E 11 entered the Marmora on the following day. His vessel was newly equipped with a 6-pounder gun, and cruised for some days lashed alongside a sailing vessel, sinking a gunboat and several ships. On May 25 Commander Nasmith dived E 11 literally into Constantinople, and hit with a torpedo a large vessel alongside the arsenal. E 11 grounded several times and escaped with great difficulty from the enemy's harbour. She now established a reign of terror in the Marmora, attacking unsuccessfully the battleship *Barbarossa*, fighting with destroyers, sinking store-ships and steamers, with continued hair-breadth escapes from destruction. On June 7 she returned through the minefield, actually fouling a mine which she carried on her port hydroplane for a considerable distance while under heavy

fire from the forts. She had been in the Marmora for nineteen days, and had sunk 1 gunboat, 3 transports, 1 ammunition ship and 3 store-ships.

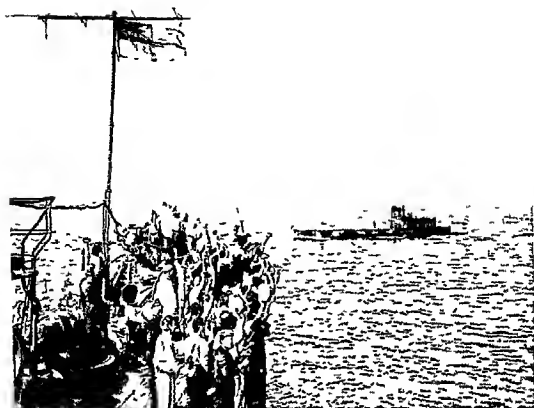
On June 10 Commander Boyle made his second entry into the Marmora where he remained for twenty-three days, sinking 1 large steamer and 13 sailing vessels. E 12 (Lieutenant-Commander Bruce) and E 7 (Lieutenant-Commander Cochrane) passed the Straits on June 20 and 30 respectively, destroyed between them 7 steamers and 19 sailing vessels, and fired repeatedly on the roads and railways along the coast.

The Nagara Anti-Submarine Net

A new peril was now to be added to the passage. In the middle of July the Turks completed the Nagara anti-submarine net. This net was made in 10-foot meshes of 3-inch, strengthened with 5-inch wire, and except for a small gateway, completely closed the passage to a depth of over 220 feet. This barrier was guarded by five motor-gunboats armed with depth charges, and by numerous guns specially placed.

On July 21 Commander Boyle, for the third time, made the passage of the Straits in E 14. A mine scraped past her near the Narrows without exploding, and by good luck she passed through the gate of the net at Nagara. On July 22 she met E 7 in the Marmora, and both vessels together continued their depredations upon shipping. All hospital ships were spared, although their increase in numbers showed that they were being used for military transport. Commander Boyle's final return on August 12, i.e. his sixth passage of the minefield, was thus described by him —

"I missed the gate and hit the net. It is possible the net now extends nearly the whole way across. I was brought up from 80 feet to 45 feet in three seconds, but luckily only thrown 15 degrees off my course. There was a tremendous noise, scraping, banging, tearing and rumbling, and it sounded as if there were two distinct obstructions, as the noise nearly ceased and



RETURN OF THE E 11

Photo Central News

Yet another submarine to distinguish itself at the Dardanelles was the E 11. Commanded by Lieut Commander Nasmith this boat entered the Sea of Marmora on the day following the return of the E 14. She stayed there for nineteen days and on one occasion actually entered Constantinople harbour where she torpedoed the Turkish transport *Slamboul*. In all the E 11 during her stay in the Marmora, sent to the bottom some eight enemy vessels. She is shown here being cheered by the crew of H M S *Grampus* on her return.

then came on again, and we were appreciably checked twice. It took about 20 seconds to get through. I was fired at on rounding Kild Bahr, and a torpedo was fired at me from Chanak, breaking surface a few yards astern of me. A mile south-west of Chanak I scraped past a mine, but it did not check me—after I got out I found some twin electric wire round my propellers and various parts of the boat were scraped and scored by wire."

On August 5, E 11 (Commander Nasmith) had made her second passage of the Straits. A mine bumped heavily along her side off Kephez point at a depth of 70 feet. To break the net at Nagara she dived to 110 feet and then charged. The net caught her bow and she was drawn violently upwards. Under the strain the wires of the net snapped with a crack, and the submarine was freed. An hour later she torpedoed a transport, all day she was

harassed by patrol craft, at dawn the next morning she was attacked by the bombs of an aeroplane. Later in the day she torpedoed a gunboat. On the 7th she was in action with troops on the roads along the coast. On the 8th she torpedoed and sank the battleship *Barbarossa*, which, escorted by two destroyers, was hurrying to the Peninsula during the Battle of Suvla Bay.

These adventures and exploits continued without cessation during twenty-nine days, at the end of which E 11 returned safely, having sunk or destroyed 1 battleship, 1 gunboat, 6 transports, 1 steamer and 23 sailing vessels.

Twenty-Seven Epic Voyages

The perilous duty was taken up successively by E 2, E 7, E 12, H 1 (Lieutenant Pirie) and E 20 (Lieutenant-Commander Clifford Warren), as well as by the French submarine *Turquoise*. In all, the passage of



THE DISABLED E 15

PH. F. N. I.

The feats of the British submarines in the Dardanelles were not, however, accomplished without loss. The E 15 which on April 17 1915 attempted the passage of the Narrows, ran aground near Dardanos. Her captain, Lieut. Commander Brodie, was killed and most of her crew captured. Her Turkish captors are seen taking over the disabled boat. They were not long to remain in possession of their prize as she was finally shattered by a torpedo from a British picket boat.

Nagara was made twenty-seven times. Every one of these voyages is an epic in itself. Out of thirteen British and French submarines which made or attempted the passage into the Marmora, eight perished—four with all or nearly all hands. Besides E 15 and AE 11, Cochrane's E 7 was caught in the Nagara net on September 4. Bombed with depth charges for 16 hours, and having tried to fall through the bottom of the net by sinking to the excessive depth of 40 fathoms, Cochrane at last rose to the surface and finding himself inextricably enmeshed, ordered his crew to jump overboard, and sank his vessel with his own hands. His subsequent escapes from the Turks and adventures in captivity are an amazing tale of courage and pertinacity.

Of the French submarines three were destroyed or captured at the entrance or in the net. *Saphir* in January, *Joule* in May, and *Mariotte* on

July 26. The *Turquoise* was the only French submarine which achieved the passage, and she was disabled and captured after a brief career in the Marmora on October 30. In the captain's cabin of the *Turquoise* the enemy found his notebook, which he had forgotten to destroy. This notebook contained the rendezvous at which the *Turquoise* was to meet the British submarine E 20 on November 6. The German submarine U 14 was repairing at Constantinople. She kept the rendezvous, and E 20, expecting a friend was blown to pieces by the torpedo of a foe.¹

The Turkish Sea Communication Cut

In all, the British submarines destroyed in the Marmora 1 battleship, 1 destroyer, 5 gunboats, 11 transports,

¹ U boat geger U boat, by Lieutenant zur See von Heimburg (*Die Woche* March 10, 1917).

44 steamers and 148 sailing vessels. The effect of the virtual stoppage of the Turkish sea communication was most serious to the enemy, and towards the end of June the Turkish Army was reduced to the narrowest margin of food and ammunition. It was only by great exertions and in the nick of time that the land route was organized sufficiently to bear the strain. Henceforward the whole supply of the Peninsula was dependent upon 100 miles of bullock transport over a single road, itself vulnerable from the sea.

The Naval History of Britain contains no page more wonderful than that which records the prowess of her submarines at the Dardanelles. Their exploits constitute in daring, in skill, in endurance, in risk, the finest examples of submarine action in the whole of the Great War, and were, moreover, marked by a strict observance of the recognized rules of warfare. When one thinks of these officers and men, penned together amid the intricate machinery which crammed their steel, cigar-shaped vessels, groping, butting, charging far below the surface at unmeasured, unknown obstructions, surrounded by explosive engines, any one of which might

destroy them at a touch, the target of guns and torpedoes if they rose for an instant to the light of day, harried by depth charges, hunted by gunboats and destroyers, stalked by the German U-boat, expecting every moment to be shattered, stifled, or hopelessly starved at the bottom of the sea, and yet in spite of all, enduring cheerfully such ordeals for weeks at a time, returning unflinchingly again and again through the Jaws of Death—it is bitter indeed to remember that their prowess and devotion were uncrowned by victory.

* * * *

The Actual Facts

At the end of the first week in July, Lord Kitchener resolved to add the 53rd and 54th Territorial Divisions to the reinforcements that were going to the Dardanelles.

There is no principle of war better established than that everything should be massed for the battle. The lessons of military history, the practice of great commanders, the doctrines of the textbooks, have in every age enjoined this rule. We see Napoleon before his battles grasping for every man he can



THE CAPTURED CREW OF THE E 15

After the loss of their vessel the survivors among the crew of the E 15 were removed to Constantinople as prisoners of war. This photograph was taken shortly after their capture.

reach, neglecting no resource however small, cheerfully accepting risks at other points, content with nothing less than the absolute maximum which human power can command.

This high prudence cannot be discerned in Lord Kitchener's preparations at this time. He did not decide to add the 53rd and 54th Divisions to the reinforcements that were going to the Dardanelles until it was impossible for the second of them to arrive before the battle had begun, thus having to go direct into action from a three weeks' voyage. The position of the troops in Egypt continued until the last moment undetermined. Including the Dardanelles details nearly 75,000 men were accumulated in Alexandria, Cairo and along the Canal. As long as we were threatening Constantinople there could be no danger of a serious Turkish invasion of Egypt.

It should have been possible to organize from General Maxwell's troops at least 30,000 additional rifles as a reserve which could be thrown into the Gallipoli operations at the decisive moment and for a limited period. If General Maxwell had been ordered to organize such a force, and if Sir Ian Hamilton had been told that he could count it among the troops available for the battle, it would have been woven into the plans which were being prepared and would have sensibly improved the prospects.

Lord Kitchener's treatment of the question was, however, most baffling. His telegraphic correspondence with Sir Ian Hamilton, which has been published, shows him at one moment counting large numbers of troops in Egypt as available if necessary for the Dardanelles, and at another chiding Sir Ian for attempting to draw on them. In consequence the British garrison of Egypt played no part in Sir Ian Hamilton's calculations and plans, and was only thrown in, like so much else, too late.

A Misleading Telegram

When on the eve of the battle, July 29, Lord Kitchener telegraphed to Sir Ian Hamilton informing him that he had "a total of about 205,000 men for the forthcoming operation," the General replied "The grand total you mention does not take into account non-effectives or casualties, it includes reinforcements such as the 54th and part of the 53rd Divisions, etc., which cannot be here in time for my operation, and it also includes Yeomanry and Indian troops which, until this morning, I was unaware were at my unreserved disposal. For the coming operation the number of rifles available is about half the figure you quote, viz. 120,000." This figure was not effectively disputed by the War Office.

I was not able to discover the shortage of drafts, nor was I aware of the ambiguous conditions under which the garrison of Egypt was available as a reserve. But a young Staff Officer from the Dardanelles, who reached London in July, disclosed to me the shortage of ammunition and suggested that consignments sent by rail to Marseilles instead of by sea might still reach the army in time for the battle. I therefore urged Lord Kitchener to send the whole of the latest weekly outputs by this route. Usually most kind and patient with my importunity, he took this request very much amiss. I declared I would demand a Cabinet decision, and we parted abruptly. I spent the afternoon and evening marshalling opinion, and informed the Prime Minister of my intention to raise the issue. However, when the decks were cleared for action and I was invited to state my case, Lord Kitchener ended the matter by stating that he had now found it possible to issue the necessary orders. Three train-loads of high explosive shell went accordingly.

Upon such preludes the event was now to supervene.

CHAPTER LI

THE BATTLE OF SUVLA BAY

The Threelfold Plan—The Forces Available—The Helles Attack—Lone Pine—The Sortie from Anzac—The Landing at Suvla—First Twenty-Four Hours at Suvla—At Liman von Sanders's Headquarters—The Turkish Divisions from Bulair—An Anxious Interval—The Anzac Advance Resumed—The Struggle for the Crest Line—Colonel Allanson's Account—A Fatal Mischance—Sir Frederick Stopford at Suvla Bay—The Second Twenty-Four Hours—Colonel Aspinall's Account—Arrival of the Commander-in-Chief—His Personal Intervention—Attacks on the 9th and 10th at Suvla—Mustapha Kemal's Counterstroke at Anzac—Actions of the 15th and 21st—The True Cause of Failure—Mistakes of Downing Street and Whitehall

THE long and varied annals of the British Army contain no more heart-breaking episode than the Battle of Suvla Bay. The greatness of the prize in view, the narrowness by which it was missed, the extremes of valiant skill and of incompetence, of effort and inertia, which were equally presented, the malevolent fortune which played about the field, are features not easily to be matched in our history. The tale has been often told, and no more than a general survey can here be attempted.¹

The Threelfold Plan

Sir Ian Hamilton's plan had for its supreme object the capture of Hill 971 (Koja Chemen Tepe), the dominating point of the Sari Bair Ridge, and working from there, to grip the neck of the Peninsula from Gaba Tepe to Mardos. This conception was elaborated as follows—

(1) To break out with a rush from Anzac and cut off the bulk of the Turkish Army from land communication with Constantinople

(2) To gain artillery positions which would cut off the bulk of the Turkish Army from sea traffic whether with Constantinople or with Asia

(3) To secure Suvla Bay as a winter base for Anzac and all the troops operating in that neighbourhood

For this purpose three separate attacks were prepared in extreme

detail by the Army Staff during the month of July first, a holding attack by two of the six divisions at Helles to prevent the Turks from removing any troops from this sector of the front, secondly, a great attack from Anzac on the main and dominating ridge of Sari Bair by the two Australasian divisions, reinforced by the 13th New Army Division and one British and one Indian brigade, and thirdly, a landing by two divisions (the 10th and 11th) forming the IXth Corps at Suvla Bay to secure the Anafarta Ridge and join their right hands to the Anzac attack and help it as it progressed

The Forces Available

The Helles sector was held by 35,000 men under General Davies. To the Anzac attack were assigned 37,000 under General Birdwood, and to the Suvla attack, 25,000 under General Stopford, the whole aggregating, with a reserve on the islands or approaching on the sea of 20,000 to 25,000, about 120,000 fighting men.

The Turks believed that the British had received reinforcements amounting perhaps to 100,000 men, and they expected a general attack, together with a landing, early in August. They realized that the Sari Bair Ridge was the key to the Narrows, they were apprehensive of landings near Kum Tepe or near Bulair, and in addition they had to guard the Asiatic shore. They knew that Suvla and Ejelmer Bays were

¹ See map on p. 723

possible landing-places, but they did not regard landings there as sufficiently probable to warrant further dissipation of their strength. On the evening of August 6 their dispositions were as follows: at Helles, 40,000 rifles with 94 guns, opposite Anzac and between Anzac and Helles, 30,000 rifles, supported by 76 guns, at Bulair, 20,000 rifles and 80 guns, on the Asiatic coast, 20,000 rifles with about 60 guns.

In all, including detachments of troops guarding the coast at various points, the Turks had been able to marshal 20 divisions, comprising about 120,000 rifles with 330 guns, and of these 90,000 to 100,000 men and 270 guns were actually on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

The forces on both sides available for the battle are thus seen to be approximately equal. The British did not possess any of the preponderance necessary for an offensive. Once their attack was fully disclosed and battle was joined along the whole front, there was no reasonable expectation of their being able to defeat the Turkish Army. There was, however, a chance of seizing vital positions by surprise before the Turks could bring up all their forces. The situation, in fact exactly reproduces that of April 25, but on a larger scale. Once again the advantages of sea power have been neutralized by delay and the enemy given time to gather forces equal to our own, once again a frightful and dubious ordeal has taken the place of a sound and reasonably sure operation, once again the only hope lies in the devotion of the troops and the skill of their leaders, once again all is at the mercy of time and chance.

* * * *

The Helles Attack

On the afternoon of August 6 the great battle began with the attack of the Lancashire and Lowland Territorial Divisions on about 1,200 yards of the Turkish line at Helles. As it chanced, the Turks had just brought up two fresh divisions to this front. They were found in great strength, and their trench systems swarmed with men.

Fierce fighting began at once and was maintained with increasing severity for a whole week. The conflict centred round a vineyard which was stormed at the outset by the British and held by them against repeated counter-attacks until the 12th, when it was recaptured by the enemy, who the next day were driven out by the British, with whom in the end it remained.

It was not the only prize which had been purchased by costly valour. Of the seven Turkish divisions concentrated at the southern end of the Peninsula only one could be withdrawn to play its part in the real crisis of the battle.

Lone Pine

Simultaneously with the British attack at Helles there began on the evening of the 6th an Australian attack on the Lone Pine Ridge to the right of the Anzac position. This attack was itself a subsidiary preliminary to the main Anzac operation. Its object was to deceive the enemy and draw him to the Anzac right, while all the time the decisive manœuvre was to proceed out on the Anzac left. Lone Pine Ridge and the fortifications surmounting it were stormed by the 1st Australian Brigade before sundown. The great beams which covered the Turkish trenches, converting them in the absence of adequate howitzer attack, into completely protected galleries, were torn to shreds by main force. The Australians plunged through the apertures and slew or captured the defenders of the galleries.

The Turks immediately counter-attacked with the utmost fury and in large numbers. Intense and bloody fighting continued at this point throughout the night. It was renewed on the 7th and again on a great scale on the 9th, but every hostile effort to retake Lone Pine failed, and it rested to the end in the strong hands of the 1st Australian Brigade. Other attacks akin and supplemental to the assault of Lone Pine were delivered by the Australians against various fortified points in the centre of their line, particularly upon a redoubt called the Chessboard. In spite of every sacrifice no ground

ANZAC and SUVLA BAY

Map showing the Gallipoli Peninsula, including Suvla Bay, Anzac, and the surrounding terrain. Key locations marked include Suvla Point, Suvla Bay, Salt Lake, Anzac, and Gallipoli. The map also shows the positions of the British and Australian forces, as well as the Turkish forces. The map is titled 'ANZAC and SUVLA BAY' at the top left. A scale bar at the bottom left indicates distances in miles and kilometers. A legend at the bottom left explains the symbols used for roads, railways, and other features. The map is dated 1915.

MAP OF ANZAC AND SUVLA BAY
A contoured map showing the nature of the country at Anzac Cove and Suvla Bay

was gamed, and the attacking parties were in some cases almost completely destroyed

The Sortie from Anzac

While the roar of the cannonade at Helles and at Lone Pine resounded through the Peninsula, the great sortie from Anzac had begun. Each night for a week beforehand powerful reinforcements of troops had secretly and skilfully been crowded into Anzac Cove and lay concealed in gulleys and dug-outs, until on August 6 General Birdwood's force comprised 37,000 men and

72 guns. Now in the darkness of a moonless night 16,000 men in two main columns crept out from the left of the Anzac position, toiled silently a mile along the beach, then wheeled to their right and proceeded to attack by three rugged, scrub-entangled, water-formed ravines which led up to the fateful summits of Sari Bair. The opening phase of this extraordinary enterprise involved the seizure of the fortified under-features to the left and right of the three ravines. The forces to whom these tasks had been assigned gained punctually and successfully both these

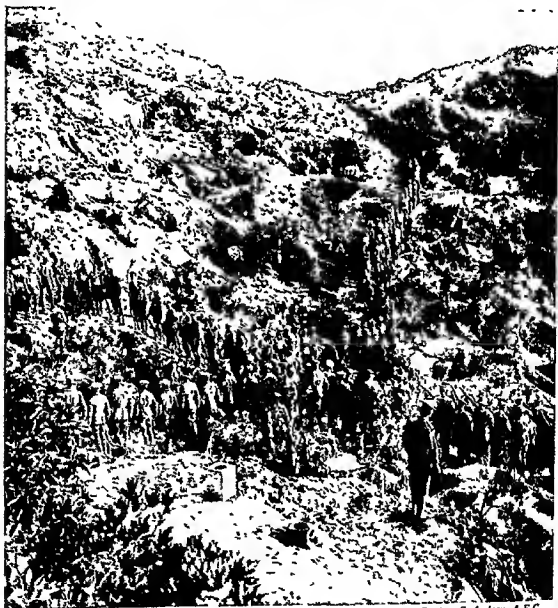


Photo: Captain C. Jackson, A.F.C., late A.I.F., and R.A.F.

BEFORE THE ATTACK AT LONE PINE

The successful attack upon the Lone Pine ridge was entrusted to the 1st Australian Brigade, and was carried out on the evening of August 6, 1915. The position was stormed before sundown and was never retaken, in spite of heavy counter attacks. The photograph shows a company of the assaulting troops receiving final instructions before moving off.



Photo. Captain C. Jackson A.F.C.
late A.I.F. and I.A.F.

AFTER THE ATTACK AT LONE PINE

This photograph taken in one of the captured Turkish trenches on Lone Pine shortly after the attack supplies proof if such were required of the severe nature of the struggle at this point. Here as elsewhere, the Australians proved themselves gallant men and dauntless fighters.

strong points, and the main columns continued through the night to battle their way upward against darkness, boulders, scrub and the enemy's outposts.

The hope of General Birdwood, of Sir Ian Hamilton, and of the staffs had been that dawn would see the heads of the Australian and British columns in possession of the decisive summits of Chunuk Bair and Kojia Chemen Tepe. It would not have taken in daylight more than two hours to cover the distance unopposed. Six hours had been allowed under the actual conditions. But when dawn broke, the difficulties of the night and of the ground, and the stubborn and disconcerting resistance of the Turkish skirmishers, had prevented more than half the distance being covered. The troops were exhausted, and after some vain efforts, it was determined to consolidate the position gained to rest and reorganize

the troops, and to renew the attack during the night of the 7th-8th.

Here was the cardinal fatality. Had it been possible to have leap-frogged the exhausted troops by a wave of fresh reinforcements, the whole crest of Sari Bair might well have fallen before noon into our possession. It had not been found possible to organize this in the face of the difficulties of the ground and of supplies, and meanwhile the direction and scale of the attack were now fully disclosed to the enemy.

* * * *

The Landing at Suvla

It is at this point that we must move on to Suvla Bay. A number of the steel-plated motor-lighters which Lord Fisher had designed at the end of 1914 for the landing of troops upon hostile beaches had now been completed and sent to the Dardanelles. They were

designed to carry five hundred infantry at a time at a speed of five knots, were bullet-proof and fitted with landing-bridges at their bows. Their appearance gained them throughout the *Ægean* the nickname of "Beetles."

In thirteen of these Beetles, with numerous destroyers, lighters and transports, covered by a strong squadron of the Fleet, the 11th Division, followed by the 10th, had been moving through the blackest night towards Suvla Bay. Two hours before midnight the three brigades of the 11th Division reached the shore, the 34th Brigade landing at "A" Beach inside Suvla Bay, the 32nd and 33rd Brigades at "B" and "C" Beaches south of Nibrunesi Point.

In spite of the rifle fire of the Turkish outposts guarding the coast, of the grounding of some of the Beetles before they reached the shore, and the disconcerting effect from land mines which exploded near Beach "A," the whole three brigades disembarked successfully without much loss in two or three hours. Their immediate duty was to occupy the two small eminences, Hill 10 and Lala Baba, on each side of the dried-up Salt Lake, and to take possession of the high ground to the northwards towards Kiretch Tepe Sirt. Thereafter as a second step a combined attack was to be made by the troops at Hill 10 and Lala Baba upon Chocolate Hill. If this was successful, the advance was to be continued against the rugged, scrub-covered and intricate under-feature known as Ismail Oglu Tepe. It was contemplated by the Staff that unless strong forces of the enemy were encountered, all these positions might well be in the hands of the troops by dawn. The event, however, turned very differently.¹

First Twenty-Four Hours at Suvla

It was 2 a.m. before the half battalion of Turks holding Lala Baba had been driven off and the hill occupied. Meanwhile the Brigadier commanding the 34th Brigade, having landed at Beach "A," perceived a sand-hill near the shore which he took to be Hill 10, and

was content to occupy this until dawn. It was broad daylight before Hill 10 was taken and its surviving defenders retired slowly into the scrub of the plain. Thus the morning of the 7th saw only the first part of the task of the 11th Division accomplished, and as the light grew stronger Turkish artillery from unseen positions in the hills began fitfully to shell the various Beaches and the landed troops. Darkness exercises so baffling and mysterious an effect upon the movements even of the most experienced troops that the time-table of the Staff may well be deemed too ambitious. But the performance fell far short of reasonable expectation. The British Intelligence believed that five Turkish battalions, aggregating 4,000 men with artillery, were guarding this part of the coast. In fact, however, only three battalions, two of which were gendarmerie, aggregating about 1,800 men and 20 guns, stood in the path of the 11th Division.

The 10th Division, under General Hill, now approached the shore near Lala Baba and began to disembark from dawn onwards under an occasional shell-fire. By 8 a.m. thirteen battalions of the 11th Division, two mountain batteries and the covering ships were all in action, and the 10th Division was rapidly growing behind them. This force, rising as the day passed to 20,000 men, had only to advance three miles from their landing-places to brush before them what was left of the 1,800 Turks and occupy positions where water was plentiful and which were of decisive importance in this part of the field. Instead of doing this all the troops that had landed either remained idle near Lala Baba for many hours or toiled along the sandy shore around the Salt Lake, a march of five miles in the heat of the day, before attacking Chocolate Hill. Thirst and exhaustion afflicted these young soldiers, and the evening was far advanced before by a spirited attack they made themselves masters of Chocolate Hill.

Night closed with the troops much wearied, with their units intermingled, their water supply in confusion, and with only their earliest objectives ob-

¹ All these positions can be followed on the map on page 723.

tuned. About a thousand casualties had been sustained, and these were almost entirely confined to three or four battalions. Thus passed the first twenty-four hours at Suva Bay.

At Luman von Sanders's Headquarters

On the evening of August 6 the full telephones had carried the news of the beginning of the battle to General Luman von Sanders in his headquarters at Gallipoli, almost as soon as he heard the opening of the cannonade. Heavy British and Australian attacks were beginning at Helles and at Lone Pine, and at the same time British attacks in the Gulf of Vicos and opposite Anafan were reported as actual or prospective landings.

Precious as were the moments it was impossible to take any measures before the intention of the assailants was fully disclosed. But before midnight news was received that large masses of troops were moving out from the left of the Anafan position along the coast northwards and later, that numerous disembarkations were taking place at Suva Bay. Two divisions in reserve at Vidos were ordered to reinforce the defenders of Suva Bay. These could certainly come into action during the next day.

Suva Bay, however, was an invulnerable surprise against which it would not have been reasonable to prepare on a great scale beforehand. Who could measure the strength of the attack? A division, two divisions, an entire corps, two corps—no one could tell. But whatever might be the strength of the invaders there stood between them and the vital positions of Kiretch Tepe Sirt, the Anafan Ridge and Ismail Oglu Tepe, only the German Major Willmer with one battalion of Gallipoli gendarmes, one of Brussels gendarmes and one of the 31st regiment with 20 guns. No help could come from the south, all was becoming locked in general battle there.

The Turkish Divisions from Bulair

Luman von Sanders, repeating his procedure of April 26, ordered the 7th and

12th Divisions to march at once from Bulair to Suva Bay, and all the troops on the Anafan side to cross to Gallipoli. Once again Anafan and the vital water line must be kept virtually unguarded, the cross spoil of an advance ahead of them. "For the second time," wrote the German Commander, "the upper part of the Gulf of Vicos was completely denuded of troops and on the Anafan side only three battalions and six batteries and four batteries of coast defence." The 7th Turkish Division received orders to march at 2 p.m. and the 12th at 3 p.m. on August 7. Both divisions started from the neighbourhood of Bulair by the two roads running roughly along the Peninsula. The distance to the coast and Suva Bay was less than that of the 1st.

It seemed to General von Sanders that no effective help could reach Major Willmer and his company before the night of the 8th and that an immediate attack might be necessary before the morning of the 9th. By daylight of the 7th the water level of the British landing was the great Anafan filled the Bay, its guns were at the bulk and caissons of troops were landing in successive waves upon the beach and gathering in the plain. From 10 a.m. to the north the 7th and 12th Divisions, forming the 11th Turkish Army Corps had only just begun their march. However during the afternoon General von Sanders's Chief of Staff, commanding the Corps, reported, to Sanders's extreme surprise that his two divisions had reached their destinations east of Anafan having covered a double march in the day. On this Sanders ordered a general attack at dawn on the 8th into the Anafan Plain.

Before daylight on the 8th he mounted his horse and rode to the deployment area of this attack. He wandered about for some time looking vainly for his troops. He found at length a Staff Officer of the 7th Turkish Division, who reported that he was looking for an outpost position that a large part of the 7th and 12th Divisions were still far behind, and that an attack

that morning was out of the question. The Commander-in-Chief therefore ordered the attack to begin at sunset.

An Anxious Interval

He passed the day of the 8th in great anxiety, having still nothing between him and the immense forces of the invader but the exhausted and much reduced gendarmerie. Four hundred men, the remains of the Brussa gendarmes and of the 2nd/31st battalion, were at Ismail Oglu Tepe. Three hundred men, the remains of the Gallipoli gendarmes, were on Kiritch Tepe Sirt. There were no troops between these two points. Kavak and Tekke hills and all the low intervening ground was absolutely unoccupied. In these circumstances all the Turkish guns, except one, were withdrawn behind the Anafarta Ridge to avoid what seemed to be their otherwise inevitable capture.

Towards evening General von Sanders learned from Major Will-

mer that the XVth Turkish Corps had not yet arrived at its area of deployment. He summoned its commander to his presence and learned from him that the exhausted condition of the troops did

not permit of any attack before the morning of the 9th. In his indignation at having been mocked by false hopes, he dismissed the General of the XVth Corps and confided the vital fortunes of the whole of the Ottoman Empire to an officer of whom we have heard before—and since "That same evening," he writes, "I transferred the command of all the troops in the Anafarta sector to Mustapha Kemal Bey, formerly commanding the 19th Division."

* * *

The Anzac Advance Resumed

We must now return to the Anzacs and Sari Barr. The whole of the 7th was spent by General Birdwood's troops in reorganizing, resting and preparing for renewed battle at dawn. The line of Gburkas, British and Anzacs lay across the mountain slopes, having gained about two-thirds of the distance to their summits. But those summits were now guarded by three times the defenders of the night before.



Photo. Captain C. Jackson, A.F.C.
late 11th, and R.A.F.

NEWS FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD

Owing to the nature of the Gallipoli front a few square miles of land cut off on every side by the sea, officers and men alike were completely out of touch with daily events taking place elsewhere. To remedy this situation Army Headquarters printed a modest little bulletin for issue to the troops. Referred to at times by irreverent people as "The Gallipoli Liear," the bulletin's news items were inclined to err on the optimistic side, but its arrival was invariably welcomed and gave the men something to talk about.

The advance from Anzac was resumed before dawn on the 8th. The right and centre columns, starting from Rhododendron Spur, assaulted Chunuk Bair. The left column starting

from the head of the most northerly of the three ravines attacked Hill Q, a knoll upon the main ridge separated by a dip from Koja Chemen Tepe. This was a restriction of the original front of attack. An intense struggle now began and raged for three days without cessation. The right column of New Zealand troops soon after daybreak seized, conquered and held a substantial position on the south-western end of Chunuk Bair, and thus established themselves on the main ridge. The centre and left columns, unsupported by any help from Suvla Bay, were unable to make much progress. Night quenched for a while the bloody conflict. Meanwhile fresh Turkish troops continually reached the defence, and owing to the difficulties of water and ground no reinforcements could be employed in the attack.

The Struggle for the Crest Line

The battle was renewed with undiminished fury on the 9th. The Anzac right maintained itself on Chunuk Bair, its left attacked Hill Q, its centre sought to join these two positions by occupying the saddle between them. These operations were preceded and sustained by an intense bombardment of every available gun of the Fleet and Army. The left attack, delayed by the darkness and the ground, was late in coming into action and failed to take



MUSTAPHA KEMAL

Photo Central Press

Born at Salonica in 1880 this remarkable man was in 1915 in command of the 19th Turkish Division on Gallipoli. The text describes how the hand of fate directed that at the time of the Anzac landing Kemal should be exercising his best regiment on Sari Bair. On that day and later at Suvla when General von Sanders entrusted to him the command of all the troops in the Anafarta sector Kemal Pasha deserved well of his country. The story of Mustapha is not yet complete. As the regenerator of Turkey in the post-war years much has been heard of him. From being a divisional commander in 1915 Kemal has become a figure of international importance.

Hill Q. But in spite of this the 6th Ghurkas and two companies of the 6th South Lancashires, belonging to the centre, striving upwards, gained command of vital positions on the saddle between Chunuk Bair and Hill Q.

Colonel Allanson's Account

The heroic officer, Colonel Cecil Allanson, in command of the 6th Ghurkas, who led the assault, has

recorded his experiences in the tragedy which followed.¹ He passed the night of the 8th-9th in the firing line

"At an angle of about 35 degrees and about a hundred yards away were the Turks. During the night a message came to me from the General Officer Commanding to try and get up on to 971 at 5 15 a m, and that from 4 45 to 5 15 the Navy would bombard the top. I was to get all troops near me to co-operate. As I could only get three companies of British troops, I had to be satisfied with this. I had only 15 minutes left, the roar of the artillery preparation was enormous, the hill,

¹ Written forty eight hours after the event

which was almost perpendicular, seemed to leap underneath one. I recognized that if we flew up the hill the moment it stopped, we ought to get to the top. I put the three companies into the trenches among my men, and said that the moment they saw me go forward carrying a red flag, every one was to start. I had my watch out, 5 15.

"I never saw such artillery preparation, the trenches were being torn to pieces, the accuracy was marvellous, as we were only just below. At 5 18 it had not stopped, and I wondered if my watch was wrong. 5 20 silence, I waited three minutes to be certain, great as the risk was. Then off we dashed, all hand in hand, a most perfect

advance and a wonderful sight. At the top we met the Turks, Le Marchand was down, a bayonet through the heart. I got one through the leg, and then for about what appeared ten minutes, we fought hand to hand, we bit and fisted, and used rifles and pistols as clubs, and then the Turks turned and fled, and I felt a very proud man, the key of the whole Peninsula was ours, and our losses had not been so very great for such a result. Below I saw the Straits, motors and wheeled transport, on the roads leading to Ach Baba.

A Fatal Mischance

"As I looked round I saw we were not being supported, and thought I could help best by going after those [Turks] who had retreated in front of us. We dashed down towards Mados, but had only got about 100 feet down when suddenly our own Navy put six 12-in monitor shells into us, and all was terrible confusion.¹ It was a deplorable disaster, we were obviously mistaken for Turks, and we

¹ The size of these shells and who fired them has never been established



Photo. Central News

LIEUT-GENERAL SIR FREDERICK STOPFORD

Commander of the IXth Corps at Suvla Bay, General Stopford appears to have lacked the force and drive essential for the successful direction of so vital an operation. Had he instead of resting content with the successful landing of his men, used the golden hours during which the Turkish reinforcements were still some distance away to seize the all important ridges the story of Gallipoli might have had a different ending.



Photo Central Press

UNBROKEN HARMONY AT SUVLA AUGUST 8 1915

While General Stopford aboard the sloop *Jongul* was expressing to Colonel Aspinall Sir Ian Hamilton's General Staff Officer for Operations his unbounded satisfaction upon the successful landing while behind Anafarta General Luman von Sanders awaited with impatience the arrival of his reinforcements from Bulair eager and willing British troops in strength more than enough to have seized the ridges were suffered to remain leaderless and idle on the beaches

had to get back. It was an appalling sight the first hit a Ghurka in the face, the place was a mass of blood and limbs and screams, and we all flew back to the summit and to our old position just below¹. I remained on the crest with about 15 men, it was a wonderful view, below were the Straits, reinforcements coming over from the Asia Minor side, motor-cars flying. We commanded Kild Bahr, and the rear of Achu Baba and the communications to all their Army there.

"I was now left alone much crippled by the pain of my wound, which was stiffening, and loss of blood. I saw the advance at Suvla Bay had failed, though I could not detect more than one or two thousand against them, but I saw large Turkish reinforcements being pushed in that direction. My telephone lines were smashed. I now dropped down into the trenches of the night before, and after getting my wound bound up, proceeded to try and find where all the regiment was, I got them all back in due course, and awaited support before moving up the hill again. Alas! it was never to come, and we were told to hold our position throughout the night of the 9th-10th.

"During the afternoon we were counter-attacked by large bodies of Turks five times between 5 and 7 p.m., but they never got to within 15 yards of our line. Captain Tones and Le Marchand are buried on the highest summit of the Chunuk Bair. I was ordered back to make a report. I was very weak and faint. I reported to the General, and told him that unless strong reinforcements were pushed up, and food and water could be sent us, we must come back, but that if we did we gave up the key to the Gallipoli Peninsula. The General then told me that nearly everywhere else the attack had failed, and the regiment would be withdrawn to the lower hills early next morning."

The morning of the 10th dawned on these vain prodigies of devotion.

¹ 150 men are said to have been killed by these shells.

Twelve thousand men, at least half of those actually involved in the severity of the fighting, had fallen, and the terrible summits flamed unconquered as ever. Nevertheless the Anzac right beld with relieved troops their important gain on the Chunuk Barr, and against this the Turkish reserves were darkly gathering.

* * * *

Sir Frederick Stopford at Suvla Bay

We have seen how General Liman von Sanders spent August 8, awaiting with impatience in the hills behind Anafarta the arrival of reinforcements from Bulair. What meanwhile was happening at Suvla Bay? Our military annals, old and new, are not so lacking in achievement that one need shrink from faithful record.

Lieutenant-General Sir Frederick Stopford, Commander of the IXth Corps, had arrived with his staff in the sloop *Jongul* at daylight on the 7th. He had remained on the *Jongul* on account of the facilities of wireless and signal communication. During the afternoon of the 8th he had paid a visit to the shore.

General Stopford was an agreeable and cultivated gentleman who fifteen years before had served in the South African War as Military Secretary to Sir Redvers Buller. After commanding the London District, he had left the Army in 1909, and had lived until the outbreak of the great struggle in a retirement unhappily marked by much ill-health. From this seclusion he had been drawn, like many others, by the enormous expansion of our land forces. He had been entrusted by Lord Kitchener with the task of training an Army Corps in England, and he now found himself for the first time in his life in a position of high and direct responsibility and in actual command of troops in the presence of the enemy. In these circumstances we are certainly entitled to assume that he did his best.

The Second Twenty-Four Hours

The natural disquietudes with which he had contemplated the nocturnal

landing on a hostile shore were no sooner relieved by success, than another set of serious considerations presented themselves. The enemy might be more numerous than the Staff believed, they might have more trenches than the aeroplane reconnaissance had reported. Moreover, they might at any time resume the desultory shelling of the Beaches which had died away on the evening of the 7th.

In this situation the measures which he considered most necessary were the reorganization of the troops who had landed, the improvement of their supplies particularly in regard to water, the digging of trenches to secure the ground they had gained, and the landing of as much artillery as possible to support their further advance. In these occupations August 8, the second twenty-four hours since the landing, passed peacefully away, while the Chief-of-Staff, General Reed, who shared his Chief's outlook to the full, prepared the orders and arrangements for an advance at daybreak on the 9th. "The second day of the IXth Corps' stay at Suvla," writes General Callwell, at this time Director of Operations at the War Office, "was, from the fighting point of view, practically a day of rest."¹

We may pause to survey the scene on both sides of the front this sunny August afternoon. On the one hand, the placid, prudent, elderly English gentleman with his 20,000 men spread around the Beaches, the front lines sitting on the tops of shallow trenches, smoking and cooking, with here and there an occasional rifle shot, others bathing by hundreds in the bright blue bay where, disturbed hardly by a single shell floated the great ships of war on the other, the skilful German stamping with impatience for the arrival of his divisions, expecting with every hour to see his scanty covering forces brushed aside, while the furious Kemal animated his fanatic soldiers and hurled them forward towards the battle.

* * * *

Colonel Aspinall's Account

Sir Ian Hamilton's General Staff Officer for Operations, Colonel Aspinall, had been ordered to report on the Suvla situation for the Commander-in-Chief. He arrived on the morning of the 8th. He has written a graphic account¹ of the peaceful scene that met his gaze. When his first incredulity had been confirmed by a tour of the shore, he proceeded on board the *Jonquil* where the Corps Commander still had his headquarters.

"General Stopford greeted me by 'Well, Aspinall, the men have done splendidly and have been magnificent.' 'But they haven't reached the hills, Sir,' I replied. 'No,' he answered, 'but they are ashore!' I replied that I was sure the Commander-in-Chief would be disappointed that they had not yet reached the high ground covering the Bay, in accordance with the orders, and I impressed upon him the urgent importance of moving forward at the earliest possible moment, before the enemy's reinforcements forestalled him on the hills. General Stopford replied that he quite realized the importance of losing no time, but that it was impossible to advance until the men had rested. He intended to make a fresh advance on the following day.

"I then went on board the Admiral's flagship and sent the following telegram to General Headquarters—

"Just been ashore where I found all quiet. No rifle fire, no artillery fire, and apparently no Turks. IX Corps resting. Feel confident that golden opportunities are being lost and look upon situation as serious."

"Shortly after sending this message I heard that the Commander-in-Chief was already on his way to Suvla, and a few minutes later he came in to harbour on the Admiral's yacht."

* * * *

Arrival of the Commander-in-Chief

The harmony of Suvla Bay was marred late in the afternoon by the

¹ Colonel Aspinall has placed this statement at my disposal.

¹ *The Dardanelles Campaign*, p. 229

arrival of the Commander-in-Chief

Sir Ian Hamilton had been persuaded by his Staff that his proper place during this great triple battle was in his regular headquarters at Imbros. Here then he remained during the whole of the 7th and the morning of the 8th, digesting such information

as the telegrams from the various sectors of the front contained. But at 11.30 on the morning of the 8th he became so disquieted with the want of news from Suvla that he could bear his isolation no longer, and determined to go there at once.

A destroyer, the *Aino*, had been specially placed at his disposal by the Navy for the period of the operations, and to the *Aino* accordingly signals for instant departure were made. It then appeared that the local Rear-Admiral had for reasons connected with the condition of

the boilers, ordered the fires to be drawn from this vessel, and that she could not move for six or seven hours. Finding himself thus, in his own words, "marooned," the Commander-in-Chief became both distressed and indignant.

His complaints induced the local Rear-Admiral to offer him a passage on the yacht *Triad*, which was leaving for Suvla at 4.15 p.m. On this accordingly the General embarked and reached Suvla Bay about 6 o'clock. Here he found the *Chatham* with Admiral de Robeck and Commodore Keyes on board.

They expressed to him their profound uneasiness at the paralysis which seemed to have seized upon the troops. On the top of this came Colonel Aspinall. On hearing his report the Commander-in-Chief boarded the *Jonquil*, where he found General Stopford, tired from his walk on the



Photo Imperial War Museum

NORTH BEACH, ANZAC

Ocean on North Beach Anzac is to the north of Anzac Cove. Still farther north is Suvla Bay.



Photo Imperial War Museum

TERRITORIAL GUNNERS AT SUVLA

An 18 pdr gun in action against the Turks at Suvla. The 18 pdr or field gun did good service on Gallipoli, being both swift in manœuvre and effective in action.



Photo Imperial War Museum

HORSES ASHORE AT SUVLA

Another scene after the landing at Suva. The beach now presents an appearance more in keeping with an advanced base than is apparent in the photograph on page 731.

shore, but otherwise happy. General Stopford said that "everything was quite all right and going well." He proceeded to explain that the men had been very tired, that he had not been able to get water up to them or land his guns as quickly as he hoped, he had therefore decided to postpone the occupation of the high ground which "might lead to a regular battle" until next morning, that meanwhile the Brigadiers had been told to gain what ground they could without serious fighting, but that actually they had not occupied any dominating tactical point.

His Personal Intervention

The Commander-in-Chief did not accept this result. He knew that reinforcements were marching southward from Bulair. He believed that the Anafarta Ridge was still unoccupied by any appreci-

able enemy force. He apprehended, and rightly, that what might be gained on the evening of the 8th without fighting would involve a bloody struggle in the dawn. He urged an immediate advance on Ismail Oglu and Tekke hills.

General Stopford raised a number of objections, and the Commander-in-Chief determined to visit the Divisional Headquarters on shore and see for himself. General Stopford did not accompany him.

General Hammersley, the Divisional Commander, was not able to give a very clear account of the situation, and after a considerable discussion the Commander-in-Chief determined personally to intervene. General Hammersley had told him that the 32nd Brigade was available in the neighbourhood of Sulajik and was capable

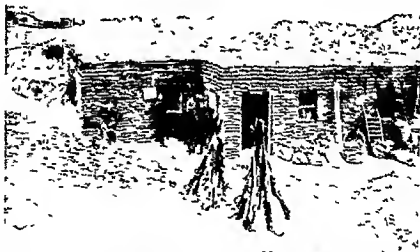


Photo Imperial War Museum

THE ARMY POST OFFICE SUVLA

Everything is now orderly and shipshape at Suva. The Post Office is constructed the mails have come in. Nothing essential is lacking save Anafarta and Scimitar Hill.

of moving forward Sir Ian Hamilton thereupon told the Divisional Commander "in the most distinct terms that he wished this Brigade to advance and dig themselves in on the crest line" General Hammersley apparently concurred in this, and afterwards claimed that he had acted on his own responsibility, not as the result of a direct order, but of the expression of a wish personally made by the Commander-in-Chief. Accordingly after Sir Ian Hamilton had returned to the *Triad*, General Hammersley directed the 32nd Brigade to concentrate and endeavour to gain a foothold on the high ground north of Kuchuk Anafarta. He specially mentioned the 6th East Yorkshire Battalion as one that should be recalled from its existing position and concentrated. On these decisions darkness fell.

The 32nd Brigade was not, however, disposed as its Divisional Commander imagined. On the contrary, with praiseworthy initiative two battalions had pushed forward far in advance of the rest of the IXth Corps, and finding no opposition, one had occupied a good position near Abrikar and the other was actually entrenching itself on Scimitar Hill. It is extraordinary that on such a quiet day this should not have been known at the Divisional Headquarters less than two miles away. Both these battalions were recalled from the positions which they had gained and were concentrated for the advance to Kuchuk Anafarta. These movements deranged the general plan of attack which was fixed for dawn, they involved the evacuation of the valuable position of Scimitar Hill, never afterwards, in spite of all efforts, to be regained. Nor in the end was it possible for the 32nd Brigade to make its attack until daybreak.

Attacks on the 9th and 10th at Suvla

At dawn on the morning of the 9th the British advance from Suvla was at last resumed. The attack was delivered by the 11th Division, the 31st Brigade of the 10th Division, and by some battalions of the 53rd Territorial Division

which had been newly landed, and was directed against the high ground from Kuchuk Anafarta on the left to Ismail Oglu Hill. Simultaneously, however, the counter-attack ordered by Liman von Sanders also began. The leading reinforcements from the 7th and 12th Turkish Divisions had arrived overnight, and the enemy was perhaps three times as strong as on the previous day and constantly increasing.

No sooner had the 6th East Yorkshire Battalion been withdrawn from Scimitar Hill than the Turks had reoccupied it. It was necessary that this hill should be taken before an effective advance could be made on its right against Ismail Oglu Hill. The 31st Brigade of the 10th Division therefore assaulted Scimitar Hill, but was unable to recapture it, and the whole of the right of the attack was prejudiced in consequence of the failure to regain this feature. The 32nd Brigade on the left of the line likewise failed to reach its goal, and in parts of the front the troops were driven back in disorder by the ardour with which the Turkish newcomers threw themselves into the fight.

The rest of the 53rd Division were landed during the 9th, and the battle was renewed on the morning of the 10th and maintained all day. Both Scimitar and Ismail Oglu Hills were partially captured, but were lost again under the pressure of violent counter-attacks. When night fell over the battlefield, lit up with the fiercely burning scrub, the IXth Corps occupied positions very little more advanced than those which it had gained on the first day of its landing, and ample Turkish forces stood entrenched and victorious upon all the decisive positions. The losses had not exceeded a thousand on the 7th, but nearly 8,000 officers and men were killed or wounded at Suvla Bay on the 9th and 10th.

* * * *

Mustapha Kemal's Counterstroke at Anzac

The closing event of the battle has now to be recorded. When daylight

broke on the morning of the 10th the British from Anzac still held their hard-won positions on Chunuk Bair. Two battalions of the 13th Division—the 6th North Lancastres and the 5th Wiltshires—had relieved the worn-out troops who had stormed the hill. They had barely settled down in their new position when they were exposed to a tremendous attack.

After his successful action at Suvla Bay on the 9th, Mustapha Kemal passed the night in preparing a supreme effort to regain this priceless ridge. The whole of the Turkish 8th Division brought from the Asiatic shore with three additional battalions and aided by a powerful and converging artillery were led forward to the assault by Mustapha Kemal in person. The thousand British rifles—all for whom room could be found on the narrow summit—were engulfed and overwhelmed in this fierce flood. Very few of the Lancashire men escaped, and the Wiltshire battalion was literally annihilated.

Flushed with victory the Turks pressed over the summit and poured down the steep face of the mountain in dense waves of men intent on driving the invaders into the sea. But here they encountered directly the whole blast of fire from the Fleet and from every gun and machine gun in the Anzac-British line. Under this storm the advancing Turkish masses were effectively crushed. Of three or four thousand men who descended the seaward slopes of the hill, only a few hundred regained the crest. But there they stayed—and stayed till the end of the story. Thus by the 10th the whole of the second great effort to win the Straits had ended at all points without decisive gains.

Actions of the 15th and 21st

Two serious actions had still to be fought before the failure was accepted as final. The 54th Territorial Division had now landed at Suvla, and with its support on the 15th and 16th two brigades of the 10th Irish Division attacked along the high Kiretch Tepe Sirt Ridge which bounds Suvla Bay on the north. Well supported by fire from

the sea, these troops under General Mahon at first made good progress. But in the end they were compelled by counter-attacks and bombing to give up most of the ground they had gained. This action does not bulk very largely in British accounts, and its critical character seems scarcely to have been appreciated. Liman von Sanders says of it—

"It during their attacks on August 15 and 16 the British had captured and held the Kiretch Tepe, the whole position of the 5th Army would have been outflanked. The British might have then achieved a decisive and final victory."

A further effort was made on August 21, directed this time to the capture of Ismail Oglu Hill. For this purpose the 29th Division was brought from Helles and the dismounted Yeomanry Division from Egypt to reinforce the 10th, 11th, 53rd and 54th Divisions, now all landed at Suvla Bay. Strong forces of the Anzac left under General Cox also co-operated.

But the Turks were now perfectly fortified and in great strength. Less than sixty guns, only sixteen of which were even of medium calibre, were available to support the attack, and for these the supply of ammunition was eviguous. The battle was fiercely fought in burning scrub and a sudden and unusual mist hampered the attacking artillery, and though the Anzac left gained and held some valuable ground, no general results were achieved.

"The attacks," said Liman von Sanders, "were repulsed by the Turks after heavy loss and after putting in the last reserve, including the cavalry." The British losses, particularly of the Yeomanry and the 29th Division, who assaulted with the utmost determination, were heavy and fruitless. On this dark battlefield of fog and flame Brigadier-General Lord Longford, Brigadier-General Kenna, V.C., Colonel Sir John Milbanke, V.C., and other paladins fell. This was the largest action fought upon the Peninsula, and



OVER THE TOP AT ANZAC

Photo Imperial War Museum

This spirited photograph, taken in enfilade from another trench, shows Australasian troops advancing to attack a Turkish post. The picture conveys admirably the élan which at all times characterized the men from overseas.

it was destined to be the last. Since the new offensive had begun the British losses had exceeded 45,000, while those of the Turks were not less than 40,000. Already on the 16th Sir Ian Hamilton had telegraphed to Lord Kitchener stating that 50,000 additional rifles and drafts of 45,000 were required to enable offensive operations to be continued. These reinforcements, for reasons which the next chapter will explain, the British Government found themselves unable to supply, and a complete deadlock supervened along the fronts of both battered and exhausted armies.

The True Cause of Failure

At every phase in the battle, down even to the last action on the 21st, the issue between victory and defeat hung trembling in the balance. The slightest change in the fell sequence of events would have been sufficient to turn the

scale. But for the forty-eight precious hours lost by the IXth Corps at Suvla, positions must have been won from which decisive operations were possible.

"We all felt," wrote Sanders, "that the British leaders at the successive landings which began on August 6 stayed too long on the beach instead of pushing forward inland at all costs from each landing-place." Had the experienced 29th Division been employed at this point, had the Yeomanry from Egypt been made available from the beginning, success could hardly have been denied. When it was too late leaders of the highest quality—Byng, Fanshawe, Maude—were sent from France to replace those whose inertia or incapacity had produced such grievous results. These new Generals could be spared on the morrow of disaster, but not while their presence might have commanded success.

Criticism severe and searching has

been applied to many aspects of the Battle of Suvla Bay, but history will pronounce that it was not upon the Gallipoli Peninsula that it was lost. It is rarely that Opportunity returns. Yet in spite of the errors and misfortunes of the original operations, she had offered herself once more to our hand. But the golden moment was not in August. It was at the end of June or the beginning of July. And that moment was necessarily thrown away.

"After the failure of the attacks which followed the first landing," say the Dardanelles Commissioners (Conclusion 5), "there was undue delay in deciding upon the course to be pursued in the future. Sir Ian Hamilton's appreciation was forwarded on May 17. It was not considered by the War Council or the Cabinet until June 7. The reconstruction of the Government which took place at this most critical period was the main cause of the delay. As a consequence the despatch of the reinforcements asked for by Sir Ian Hamilton in his appreciation was postponed for six weeks."

Mistakes of Downing Street and Whitehall

This delay and the neglect to utilize the surplus forces in Egypt robbed us of the numerical superiority which it was in our power to command and which was essential to a victorious offensive. Had a reasonable action been taken even from May 17 onwards, as will be seen from the table on page 740, 15 allied divisions aggregating 150,000 rifles, could have attacked 10 Turkish divisions aggregating 70,000 to 75,000 rifles in the second week of July. Instead the mistakes which were committed in Downing Street and Whitehall condemned us gratuitously to a battle of equal numbers in August and to a hazard of the most critical kind and from that hazard we emerged unsuccessful. The errors and miscarriages which took place upon the battlefield cannot be concealed, but they stand on a lower plane than these sovereign and irretrievable misdirections.

The cause of defeat is set forth in the cruel clarity of tabular statement on page 740.



CEMETERY BY THE WATERS OF THE ÆGEAN

On the Peninsula it was often impossible to recover the bodies of men who fell in action. When this could be done the comrades of the fallen spared no pains to give them a fitting burial. Although materials were scanty appropriate memorials were erected and the graves were frequently bordered by rows of stones from the beach.

THE GREAT WAR

THE RELATIVE STRENGTHS

Date	Turkish Divisions Rifles	Actual British and French Divisions Rifles	Available ¹ British and French Divisions Rifles
February 18 (Opening of the Naval Attack)	nil 5,000	nil 2,000	4 36,000
March 20 (End of the Naval Attack)	2 14,000	4 40,000 (b) 20	9 60,000
April 25 (The first Military Attack)	6 42,000	5	14 150,000 ²
July 7 (Largest date for the second Military Attack)	10 70,000-75,000	8	
August 7 (The Battle of Suvla Bay)	20 ³ 120,000	14 120,000	14 120,000 ³

The three favourable occasions are shown in squares. It needed only a stroke of the pen in Whitehall to have produced any of them.

¹ "Available" means ready, doing nothing, capable of being sent so as to be on the spot on the date mentioned, and actually sent within a month of that date.

² British (1 from home 29th, 42nd, 52nd, 10th 11th 13th, 53rd 54th, and Royal Naval Divisions 9
1 from Egypt 1 company Division, Indian Division, and various details 2
Australian The Australian and New Zealand Army Corps 2
The French Corps (1 Division with additional units) 1

Total 14

³ The reduction of 10,000 from the July figures is accounted for by a month's net wastage among the divisions already on the Peninsula.

⁴ The following are the Turkish Divisions on the spot 14, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 19th, 20th, 26th and 27th.

CHAPTER III

THE RUIN OF THE BALKANS¹

Jealousies of the Balkan States—Their Common Interests—Balkan Policy of the Great Allies—The Russian Defeat—War on the Danube—Siege of the City of Plevna—Consequences of the Battle of Suvla Bay—A New Plan for a Balkan League—The War as We Must See It—The Balkan League—The First Balkan War—The Incident—General Serrail's Plan—General Joffre's Plan—The First Balkan War—The Battle of Luleburgaz—The Battle of Adrianople—The Siege of Constantinople—The Cabinet Compromise—The French Intervention—The First Balkan War—The Government—The Storm Bursts on Serbia

THE Christian States of the Balkans were the children of oppression and revolt

Jealousies of the Balkan States

For four hundred years they had dwelt under the yoke of the Turkish conqueror. They had recovered their freedom after cruel struggles with him during the last hundred years. Their national characteristics were marked by these hard experiences. Their constitutions and divisions resulted from them. Their populations were poor, fierce, and proud. Their governments were divided from one another by irreconcilable ambitions and jealousies. Every one of them at some recent period in its history had been the head of a considerable Empire in these regions, and though Serbia and Bulgaria splendours had been of brief duration compared to the glories of Greece, each looked back to this period of greatness as marking the measure of its historic rights. All therefore simultaneously considered themselves entitled to the ownership of territories which had in bygone centuries possessed in succession. All therefore were in convulsive quarrels and

this cause that their inde-

of the Balkan Peninsula

visible sufferings have been so much and punishment due. It was not easy for all or any of the small States to help themselves out of this almost insuperable danger, and they were forced to hold on to each other. But at the national communities, themselves, and reacting upon each other in various ways, there were in each country party and political divisions and tendencies sufficient to shake a powerful Empire. Every Balkan State was in fact in the midst of its way to power in its own country through combinations, dangers and pressing necessities, more violent, more intense than those which the domestic affairs of great nations revealed. It remained hampered by historic and pursued by races and jealousies and thus harassed and weakened, had to cope with the ever shifting combinations of Balkan politics as these in turn were influenced by the various combinations of the Great War.

In addition to all this came the policy of the three great Allied Powers. France and Russia had each its own interests and outlook, its favorite Balkan State and its favorite party in each State. Great Britain had a vague desire to see them all united, and a lofty impartiality and detachment scarcely less lasting. To this were superadded the distracting influences of the various Sovereigns and their Teutonic origins or relations. In consequence the situation was so

chaotic and unstable, there were so many vehement points of view rising and falling, that British, French and Russian statesmen never succeeded in devising any firm, comprehensive policy. On the contrary, by their isolated, half-hearted and often contradictory interventions, they contributed that culminating element of disorder which led every one of these small States successively to the most hideous forms of ruin.

Their Common Interests

Yet all the time the main interests of the three great Allies and of the four Balkan kingdoms were identical, and all could have been protected and advanced by a single and simple policy. The ambitions of every one of the Balkan States could have been satisfied at the expense of the Turkish and Austrian Empires. There was enough for all, and more than enough. The interest of the three great Allies was to range the Balkan States against these Empires. United among themselves, the Balkan States were safe. Joined to the three Allies, they could not fail to gain the territories they coveted. The addition of the united Balkan States to the forces of the Entente must have involved the downfall of Austria and Turkey and the speedy, victorious termination of the war. For everyone there was a definite prize. For Roumania, Transylvania, for Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Dalmatia and the Banat of Temesvar, for Bulgaria, Adrianople and the Enos-Midia line, for Greece, Smyrna and its hinterland, and for all, safety, wealth and power.

To realize these advantages, certain concessions had to be made by the Balkan States among themselves. Roumania could restore the Dobrudja to Bulgaria, Serbia could liberate the Bulgarian districts of Macedonia, Greece could give Kavalla as a make-weight, and as an immediate solatium to Greece, there was Cyprus which could have been thrown into the scale. As the final levers, there were the financial resources of Great Britain and whatever military and naval forces the

Entente might decide to employ in this theatre.

Baffling Policy of the Great Allies

It is astonishing that when all interests were the same, when so many powerful means of leverage and stimulus were at hand, everything should without exception have gone amiss. If in February, 1915, or possibly after the Turkish declaration of war in November, 1914, the British, French and Russian Governments could have agreed upon a common policy in the Balkans—and had sent plenipotentiaries of the highest order to the Balkan Peninsula to negotiate on a clear, firm basis with each and all of these States—a uniform, coherent action could have been devised and enforced with measureless benefits to all concerned. Instead, the situation was dealt with by partial expedients suggested by the rapid and baffling procession of events. Everything was vainly offered or done by the Allies successively and tardily, which done all at once and in good time would have achieved the result.

The Balkan States offered by far the greatest possibility open to allied diplomacy at the beginning of 1915. This was never envisaged and planned as if it were the great battle which indeed it was. Fitful, sporadic, half-hearted, changeable, unrelated expedients were all that the statesmen of Russia, France and Britain were able to employ.

Nor is it right for public opinion in these countries to condemn the Balkan States and Balkan politicians or sovereigns too sweepingly. The hesitations of the King of Roumania, the craft of King Ferdinand, the shifts and evasions of King Constantine, all arose from the baffling nature of the Balkan problem and the lack of policy of the Allies. Serbia, indeed, fought on desperately and blindly without consideration for any other interests but her own and with frightful consequences to herself, ultimately repaired only by the final victory. Roumania was throughout in peril of her life and perplexed to the foundations of her being. When at



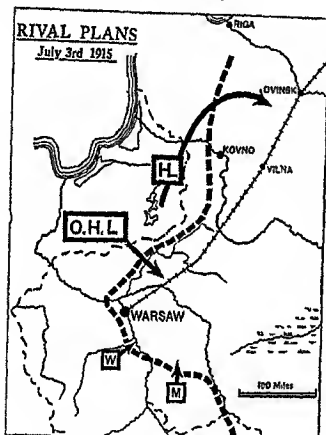
THE BALKAN PENINSULA

Map showing the strategic relation one to the other, of those Balkan States whose neutral attitude was so disturbing to the chief antagonists during the early stages of the war. With Serbia numbered in the ranks of the enemy, with Bulgaria Roumania and Greece neutral it can hardly be a matter for wonder that Falkenhayn, however unwilling he may have been, felt irresistibly drawn to the Eastern Front in order to find a passage for those munitions of war so anxiously awaited by the defenders of the Dardanelles.

last, after infinite hesitations, bargainings and precautions, she entered the war, she was too late to decide or abridge the struggle but in good time to be torn in pieces.

Bulgaria turned traitor alike to her past and to her future, and after many exertions was plunged in the woe of the vanquished Greece, rescued in the nick of time by courage and genius, and emerging with little cost upon the side of the victors, survived incorrigible to squander all that she had gained. Yet in Roumania there was Take Jonesco

always pointing clear and true, in Bulgaria, Stambulisky, braving the wrath of King Ferdinand and marching proudly to his long prison with the names of England and Russia on his lips, and in Greece, Venizelos, threading his way through indescribable embarrassments and triumphing over unimaginable difficulties, preserved his country for a time in spite of herself and might well have limited the miseries of Europe.



THE RIVAL PLANS OF O.H.L. AND H.

After the German thrust between Gorlice and Tarnow and the consequent retreat of the Russian armies in the Carpathians the directing minds of the German forces were momentarily perplexed. After Gorlice-Tarnow, what to do? Falkenhayn, thinking of the threat to the Dardanelles and with the Western Front still on his mind, wanted to stop. In the end it was decided that Mackensen should continue his march. This after some reorganization, he did. On June 22 Lemberg fell. It was next proposed that Mackensen should wheel to the north while H. carried out a similar movement to the south in order to bite off the Polish salient. H. proposed a much wider sweep round Kovno to cut the vital Warsaw-Petrograd railway. At a conference held at Posen at which the Kaiser was present it was finally decided that the northern claw of the crab should advance across the Narev, that is, further to the south than even Falkenhayn desired. The sketch map given here illustrates the contending views of O.H.L. and H. as to the path the attack from the north should follow.

The Russian Defeats

August, 1915, saw the culmination of the Russian disasters. By the end of June the German-Austrian offensive had driven the Russians out of nearly all the southern half of their huge Galician-Polish salient. This had been reduced to a semicircle 170 miles across, with Brest-Litovsk at its centre and Warsaw almost on its outer circumference. Lemberg had been lost. Mackensen's front was now faced almost north and ahead of him lay the four railway lines which fed the salient.

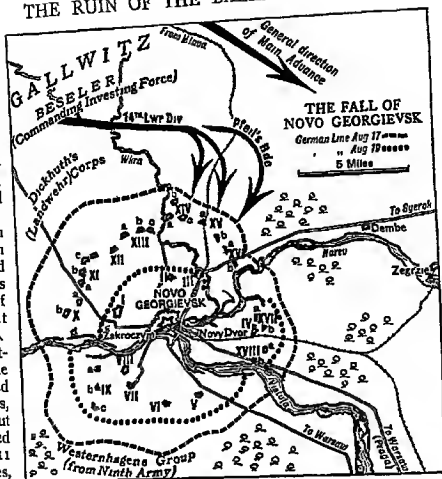
On July 13 he commenced, with a German and two Austrian Armies, an advance against the southernmost railway [the Kovel-Cholm-Lublin-Ivangorod line], with Field-Marshal Woyrsch on his left pressing eastward. By August 1 he was across the railway in the centre at Cholm and Lublin, and four days later Ivangorod and Warsaw were evacuated by the Russians. Novo-Georgievsk, where some eighty-five thousand second-class troops had been collected, made a show of defence, but capitulated on the 20th.

But this was not the end of the disasters. In the north, in Lithuania, the German Eighth and Tenth Armies under Him-

denburg, reinforced by German troops from the south where the line had been shortened, moved forward, and on August 10 had taken Kovno. All the Russian troops between Kovno and Riga were thus in danger of envelopment and fell back. Even Brest-Litovsk, the long-vaunted model fortress, did not hold out long. Invested on August 11 on three sides, it was abandoned on the 26th after the forts on the south-west front had been stormed. Thus the last semblance of the great salient had disappeared, and the Russian front, except for a forward bend covering Riga, had approximated to a north and south line.

The Russians had evaded envelopment and capture, but all their gains in Galicia had gone, they had lost Poland, 325,000 prisoners, and more than three thousand guns, besides rifles and equipment which it was impossible to replace. Worse than all, the Czar was induced to remove the Grand Duke Nicholas from his command and send him to the Caucasus.

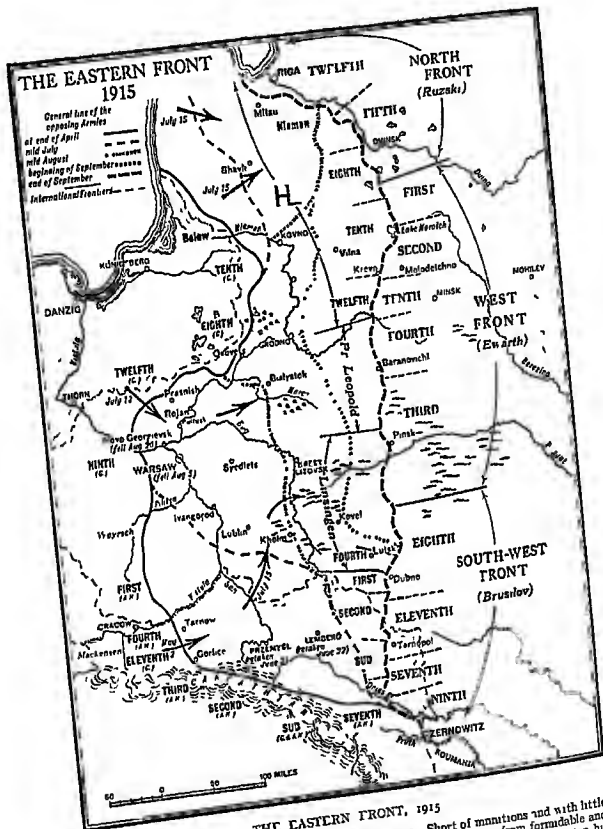
The Russian defeats from April onwards had reacted most unfortunately against Italy. In 1914 Austria could spare no more than local corps to watch the Italian frontier. By the date of the Italian declaration of war she had



THE FALL OF NOVO GEORGIEVSK

The new advance began on July 13 1915 with its threat to Warsaw to the Polish salient and to the Russians on that part of the front. The Grand Duke Nicholas however was not caught. He retreated in good time but for some obscure reason decided to hold Novo Georgievsk, an obsolete fortress to the north west of Warsaw. Here he left a garrison of 90,000 militia. To the investment of Novo Georgievsk the attention of F.L. now turned. Warsaw was evacuated by the Russian forces on August 5 and by August 17 a German invading force under General von Beseler had surrounded Novo Georgievsk. Three days later the defenders, after slaughtering their horses and burning their stores, surrendered the fortress, some 90,000 Russians, the entire garrison and 700 guns being taken by the Germans.

managed to collect 122 battalions, 10 squadrons and 216 guns against Italy, disposed in mixed groups behind carefully constructed entrenchments. But henceforward there was a constant flow of reinforcements from the Galician theatre. The Italian offensive towards Trieste, known as the first and second battles of the Isonzo, in June and July carried the Italians six miles into enemy territory, and thereafter left them as firmly rooted in trench warfare as the armies on the Western Front. The Italian operations in the Tyrol led to no more than the occupation of five small separate salients of Austrian territory. Thus to the Russian disasters was added the Italian deadlock and



THE EASTERN FRONT, 1915

The summer of 1915 was disastrous for the toiling Russians. Short of munitions and with little hope of replenishing his stores of war material, stricken by repeated blows from formidable and determined German forces, the Grand Duke Nicholas was forced to withdraw and shorten his line. In the year's campaign the Germans killed and wounded nearly a million Russians and took three-quarters of a million prisoners. At the end of September the Roumanian frontier was seen from the map given here, reached from Riga, due south, to the Roumanian frontier. It was at this moment that the Czar, against the warnings of his Ministers decided to assume personal command of his armies. The Grand Duke Nicholas was relegated to the command against Turkey in the Caucasus.

both exercised a fatal influence upon the Bulgarian mind

* * * *

Waiting on the Dardanelles

Nevertheless all eyes in the Balkans were riveted on the Gallipoli Peninsula until the result of the Battle of Suvla Bay became known. Till it was lost the Bulgarians held their hand, and in the month of July there were still hopeful possibilities of bringing them in on the side of the Allies.

The Austro-German attack upon Serbia which seemed so imminent in February had not matured during all the months of the summer. The deep anxieties with which some members of the Cabinet viewed this great danger were happily not borne out as the months slipped away. I know of no cause for the delay of

this attack other than the influence exercised upon the Balkan States and upon Bulgaria by the operations at the Dardanelles, and the belief so widely held throughout the Balkan States that England would never relinquish such an effort without achieving success. The continued fighting on the Gallipoli Peninsula, the knowledge that large reinforcements were pouring out, and that another great trial of strength in that theatre was impending, dominated the

action of Bulgaria, and the action of Bulgaria was the fact which in turn governed the Austro-German attack on Serbia.

Serbian Obstnacy

I was strongly of opinion during the month of July that we ought not to stake the whole Balkan policy solely on the result of a battle in Gallipoli, but that, while doing everything in our power to secure a victory there, we should also strive to win Bulgaria. This could be done only by territorial concessions forced upon Greece and Serbia, combined with the granting of loans and the expectation of success in the Dardanelles.

The imminent peril in which Serbia stood, and the restricted conditions under which the Allies could afford her



WOMEN HELPING TO DIG TRENCHES AT WARSAW

Photo Illustrations Bureau

The Grand Duke Nicholas had not had it in mind to evacuate Warsaw without offering some resistance. Soldiers and civilians even women were pressed into service to dig trenches. When the formidable nature of the German plan was disclosed it was soon evident that the city was doomed and in consequence the army, plus some 350,000 of the inhabitants evacuated the city.

A New Tremendous Event.

A new tremendous event was now to strike across this darkening situation. At a Conference held at Calus early in July, the representatives of the Cabinet, viz the Prime Minister, Lord Kitchener and Mr Balfour, had, in accordance with the convictions of the overwhelming majority of their colleagues, argued against a further Anglo-French offensive in the west in 1915. They had proposed that the allied operations in France and Flanders should be confined to what was described as an "offensive defensive" or, to speak more accurately, an active defensive. The French had agreed, General Joffre had agreed. The agreement was open and formal. And it was on this basis that we had looked forward and prepared for the new battle on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

No sooner, however, had General Joffre left the Conference than, notwithstanding these agreements, he had calmly resumed the development of his plans for his great attack in Champagne, in which he confidently expected to break the German lines and roll them back. It was not until after the Battle of Suva Bay had been finally lost, and we were more deeply committed in the Peninsula than ever before, that we became aware of this.

To avoid unnecessary circulation of secret documents it had been arranged that members of the War Committee wishing to read the daily War Office telegrams could do so each morning at the War Office in Lord Kitchener's ante-room. It was my practice to read every word every day.

Decision for a Great Offensive in France

On the morning of August 21 I was thus engaged when the private secretary informed me that Lord Kitchener, who had just returned from the French Headquarters, wished to see me. I entered his room and found him standing with his back to the light. He looked at me sideways with a very odd expression on his face. I saw he had some disclosure of importance to make, and waited. After appreciable hesitation he told me

that he had agreed with the French to a great offensive in France. I said at once that there was no chance of success. He said the scale would be greater than anything ever before conceived, if it succeeded, it would restore everything, including of course the Dardanelles.

He had an air of suppressed excitement, like a man who has taken a great decision of terrible uncertainty and is about to put it into execution. He was of course bracing himself for the announcement he had to make that morning to the War Committee and to the Cabinet. I continued unconvinced. It was then 11 o'clock, and he drove me across in his car in Downing Street.

The Committee assembled. Lord Kitchener had no doubt apprised the Prime Minister beforehand, and he was immediately invited to make his statement. He told us that owing to the situation in Russia he could not longer maintain the attitude which was agreed upon in conjunction with the French at Calus, i.e. that a real serious offensive on a large scale in the west should be postponed until the Allies were ready. As he put it to us, he had himself urged upon General Joffre the adoption of the offensive. In view of the fact that, as we now know, the French plans and preparations had long been in progress, had indeed never been interrupted, this must have been a work of supererogation.

My Protest and Warning

I immediately protested against departure from the decisions of the Cabinet maturely made and endorsed by the Châms Conference, and against an operation that could only lead to useless slaughter on a gigantic scale. I pointed out that we had neither the ammunition nor the superiority in men necessary to warrant such an assault on the enemy's fortified line, that it could not take place in time effectively to relieve Russia, that it would not prevent the Germans from pursuing their initiative in theatres other than the west, and that it would rupture fatally our plans for opening the



Photo Photofrass

GERMAN REGIMENTS ENTER WARSAW

One of the German regimental bands marching through Warsaw headed by a jingling Johnny. A Turkish invention, with horse tails and small pieces of brass suspended from the crosspiece and central pole, this instrument was introduced into the Prussian Army bands by Frederick the Great

Dardanelles The following record has been preserved of these remarks —

"Mr Churchill expressed his regret at such a course. The German forces on the Western Front had not been reduced and were some 2,000,000 against the Allies 2,500,000. This amounted to a superiority for the Allies of five to four, which was inadequate for the offensive. Since our last offensive effort our relative strength had not altered, while the German defences had been strengthened.

"It seemed to him that in the hope of relieving Russia and to gratify our great and natural desire to do so, the Allies might throw away 200,000 or 300,000 lives¹ and [much] ammunition, and might possibly gain a little ground. The attack on May 9 (Festubert-Arras) had been a failure, and the line had not been altered by it. After an expenditure of lives and ammunition in this way by us, the Germans would have a chance worth seizing, and it would be worth their while to bring back great forces from the east. A superiority of two to one was laid down as necessary to attack, and we (the Allies) had not got it."

¹ Obviously this should read "men," meaning men killed and wounded, i.e. casualties

"We have to make war as we must."

These views were not seriously disputed, but it was urged that the French would move in any case, and that if we did not march too, the alliance would be destroyed. Lord Kitchener was careful not to hold out any expectation of "a decisive success," and

when pressed to define "a decisive success" he accepted my expression "a fundamental strategic alteration of the line." "There is," he said, "a great deal of truth in what Mr Churchill has said, but unfortunately we have to make war as we must and not as we should like to."

I besought the Cabinet, which followed the War Council an hour later, not to yield to the French impatience without a further conference at which all the arguments could be stated and a final appeal made. I was strongly supported by others. I was forced to admit that if the French, after hearing what we had to say, still persisted in their intention, we should of course have to conform, but I urged that a last effort should be made to avert the vast, futile and disastrous slaughter that was now impending.

Sir John French, who was in London, was interrogated by the Cabinet. He also declined to give any assurance of success, and was further extremely dissatisfied with the particular sector of attack in which he was required to operate. He had not ammunition for more than seven days' offensive battle. Nevertheless he was quite ready, if ordered, to throw himself into it with a good heart. I visited him

privately at Lancaster Gate, where he was staying for the night, and urged my opinion. He used the usual arguments about the necessity of acting in harmony with the French, and then unfolded to me the fact that General Joffre intended to employ no fewer than forty divisions in the French

sector of attack alone. Although I must admit that the tremendous scale of the operation seemed to carry the issue into the region of the unknown, I continued recalcitrant and quitted my friend in the deepest anxiety. I saw that we were confronted with the ruin of the campaign alike in the east and in the west.

* * * *

The Dardanelles Army Left to Languish

The decision to make a general attack in France involved the immediate starvation, or at any rate malnutrition, in ammunition and in drafts, of the army on the Gallipoli Peninsula. Although large numbers of men had to be sent thither merely to keep Sir Ian Hamilton's units in the field, this number, while enough to be a heavy loss elsewhere, was not sufficient to produce any useful result. The operations on the Peninsula came to a standstill, and the Turks hastened to replace their heavy losses and reorganize their shaken and in some cases shattered formations.

Meanwhile, disease and despondency were at work in our own army. The anguish of supreme success narrowly



Photo Photofress

A GREAT BRIDGE DESTROYED

One of the military precautions made necessary by the evacuation of Warsaw was the destruction of the great bridges over the Vistula. The bridge shown above spanned the Vistula between Warsaw and the Praga suburb. For some time before the evacuation all the bridges were mined and wired ready for the final scene.

but fatally missed, the sense of being ill-supported from home, the uncertainty about the future intentions of the Government, the shortage of ammunition, the threatening advent of winter, the rigorous privations of officers and men, exposed the Dardanelles army to the most melancholy ordeal. The numerous and powerful opponents of the enterprise, the advocates of evacuation, the partisans of competing schemes, found themselves well supplied with all that they desired. In these depressing conditions only the patient endurance of the British troops and the unquenchable spirit of Anzac enabled a firm posture of the army and its consequent existence to be maintained.

An Extraordinary Incident

But now a very curious incident occurred, which added greatly to the perplexities of the British Government. The political power and influence of General Sarrail rested upon foundations which it was not easy then precisely to define or explain. This officer, having been removed by General Joffre in July from the Verdun command in which he had distinguished himself, had obtained, through profound political

influence, the command of the French troops in the Orient in succession to General Gouraud, who had been seriously wounded. Whatever dispute there might be about his military achievements, his irreligious convictions were above suspicion. There appeared to be an understanding in French governing circles that he was to be assigned an important independent rôle in the east, which would give him the opportunity of gathering the military laurels from which the French Radical-Socialist elements were determined anti-Clerical generals should not be debarred.

Judge of our astonishment when, on September 1, in the midst of the preparations for a supreme battle in France, while our own army at the Dardanelles was cut to the barest minimum in drafts and ammunition, the Admiralty suddenly received, through the French naval attaché, the request to assist the French Ministry of Marine in dispatching from Marseilles four new French divisions to the Dardanelles!

General Sarrail's Plan

We were then informed that the French Government had decided to form a separate Army of the East, of six divisions, which, under the command of General Sarrail, would during the month of October land on the Asiatic shore of the Dardanelles, and advance thence upon the forts of Chanak in conjunction with our renewed attacks upon the Gallipoli Peninsula. We were requested to arrange for the relief of the two French divisions at Helles, in order that, added to the four new French divisions from France, this separate army should be constituted for the new operation.

It appeared for a space that what the most unanswerable arguments of reason, of daring, and of duty could not achieve, were to be easily secured by the interplay of French political forces. For once the gloomy embarrassments of our councils were broken by the sunlight of a happy hour. We made haste to accept the French proposal.

Lord Kitchener instantly promised the two divisions to relieve the French at Helles. Mr Balfour began at once to gather the necessary transport. Mr Bonar Law joined with me in pressing the dispatch of still larger British forces, to "make a good job of it."

Alas for the British Cabinet! They saw the truth quite clearly. They were sound and right in their general view. It was not through wrong judgment that they failed, but through want of will-power. In such times the Kingdom of Heaven can only be taken by storm.

General Joffre's Promise

But then the question arose, "Was it possible General Joffre could have agreed?" Inquiry showed that he had agreed upon conditions. His own position was not so secure as to leave him indifferent to the pressure from the political left flank. He had been forced to manoeuvre. His conditions were that the reinforcing divisions for the Dardanelles were not to leave France before the main shock of his impending battle had occurred, nor until it could be seen whether its results would be decisive or not.

Pressed on September 11, at Calais, by Lord Kitchener as to the time which it would take to ascertain this, he stated that he would know at the end of the first week's fighting one way or the other, that if it was clear by then that a general German retreat in the west—which would have to be followed up by every available man—was not going to be compelled, all the troops assigned to the Dardanelles would be released. October 10 was the date fixed for the embarkation of the leading divisions. It was noticed, however, that General Sarrail, instead of hurrying out to the Dardanelles to survey the situation on the spot and perfect his plans, as Lord Kitchener strongly pressed him to do, preferred to remain in Paris attending to matters which were doubtless of importance.

Bulgaria Begins to Move

On September 20 the sinister news reached London that a Bulgarian

mobilization was imminent and that Bulgaria was believed to have committed herself definitely to the Central Powers. On the next day the Bulgarian Prime Minister told a meeting of his followers that the cause of the Allies was lost, that Bulgaria must not attach herself to the losing side, that the Quadruple Alliance had only made vague proposals to Bulgaria about the occupation of the uncontested zone after the war, and that if Bulgaria went to war, she was assured of the neutrality of Roumania. At midnight on the 22nd, the Turks signed an agreement ceding the Dedeagatch Railway to Bulgaria, and that same day Serbia signalled with alarm the increasing movement of Austro-German forces towards her northern frontier. The long-dreaded southward thrust was about to begin.

It is significant that while Bulgaria had patiently awaited the result of the Battle of Suvla Bay before taking her ghastly plunge, her rulers did not hesitate to commit themselves on the eve of the far larger battle which was known to be impending in France. The Germans could not fail to note the massing of guns and troops in Artois and Champagne, and had in fact made all preparations to receive the shock. But their confidence in the result was shared by the Bulgarian General Staff.

* * * *

The Battle of Loos and Champagne

At dawn on September 25 the great battle in the west began. It comprised a subsidiary attack by about thirty British and French divisions at Loos, and a main attack by forty French divisions in Champagne. Sir John French had been compelled, in order to combine with the French, to accept a sphere of attack against his better judgment, but, having agreed to conform to General Joffre's plans, he threw himself into their execution with his customary determination.

The French attack in Champagne has since been described as "the unlimited method"—i.e. the armies were hurled on to advance as far as they could "into the blue," in the confident ex-

pectation that they would carry, not merely the front systems, which had been subjected to bombardment, but all intact positions and defences likely to be met with in rear. In the absurd misconceptions of the Staff, large masses of cavalry were brought up to press the victory to a decisive conclusion. At the fatal signal the brave armies marched into the firestorm. The ardour of the French infantry was not unmatched by their British comrades. The issue, however, was never in doubt. The German calculations of the strength of their front and of the numbers of troops needed to defend it were accurate and sound. Their drive against Russia, their project against the Balkans proceeded unchecked. In the first week the Anglo-French attack had secured slight advances of no strategic significance at various points, a few score of guns, and a few thousand prisoners, at the expense of more than 300,000 casualties.

The time had now come for General Joffre to release the troops for the east, but he was naturally reluctant to admit defeat. The downfall of his hopes was concealed by a continuance of the fighting, and the departure of the Dardanelles divisions receded week by week. Meanwhile, the winter season steadily approached the army on the Peninsula, and the catastrophe of the Balkans arrived.

Bulgaria Mobilizes

On September 25 the general mobilization of the Bulgarian Army had begun. Those who placed reliance on the optimistic accounts of the fighting in France which were supplied by the military authorities here and in France found it impossible to believe that the Germans, faced by such formidable assaults in the west, and extended in immense operations in the east, could spare a new army to conquer Serbia, and they therefore continued incredulous to the last.

During the third and fourth weeks of September the concentration of considerable Austro-German forces north of the Danube became unmistakable. On October 4 our Intelligence reported the



It was a dramatic fight.

HIGHLANDERS AT THE BATTLE OF LOOS

There is certain moment in war when Press and amateur photographers do not ply their art. The only mean left therefore of obtaining some pictorial record of stirring events is for an artist to build up a scene from the accounts of eye witnesses. In the case of the above picture the episode was described by a soldier who took part in the action.

presence of Mackensen at Jemappes belated and frantic efforts to deter the Bulgarians, exhausting the whole apparatus of promises and threats, were received with sullen impassivity, and the mobilization of the Bulgarian armies proceeded regularly. King Ferdinand pursued his profoundly considered and most perilous policy with mechanical precision. An iron discipline gripped the peasant soldiers, and a ruthless suppression quelled the parliamentary forces. Serbia, unresistant to the last, prepared to meet her doom with passionate appeals to her Allies and dauntless heroism in the field.

Repercussion on Greece

The repercussion of these events must now be studied. The only power which could come to the aid of Serbia before it was too late was Greece. Accordingly, at last, an earnest and united effort was made by all the Allies to

procure the entry of Greece into the general war. Twice she had placed herself at their disposal. Twice she had been rebuffed. Now it was the turn of the Allies to ask.

By treaty Greece was obliged to aid Serbia against a Bulgarian attack. King Constantine and the Greece that followed him claimed that this treaty did not apply to a war in which Serbia was attacked not only by Bulgaria but by a great Power. Serbia invoked the treaty, demanded the support of Greece, and also appealed to the Allies for 150,000 men.

M. Venizelos, again Prime Minister and at the head of a parliamentary majority fresh from elections, urged the Allies to send troops to Salonika to enable Greece to enter the war according to her honourable obligations. As a military measure to aid Serbia directly, the landing at this juncture of allied forces at Salonika was absurd. The hostile armies concentrating on the

eastern and northern frontiers of Serbia were certain to overwhelm and overrun that country before any effective aid, other than Greek aid, could possibly arrive. As a political move to encourage and determine the action of Greece, the dispatch of allied troops to Salonika was justified. But the question arose: Where were the troops to come from? Obviously from the Dardanelles and only from the Dardanelles. A French and a British division, all that could be spared and all that could get to Salonika in time, were accordingly taken from Sir Ian Hamilton's hard-pressed army in the closing days of September.

The reader who has a true sense of the values in the problem will not be surprised to learn that this dispatch of troops from the Dardanelles produced the opposite effect to that intended or desired. King Constantine had been trained all his life as a soldier. He had studied very closely the strategic situation of his country and conceived himself to be in authority on the subject. The road to his heart was through some sound military plan, and this he was never offered by the Allies.

When he learned that the allied help was to take the form of withdrawing two divisions from the Dardanelles, he naturally concluded that that enterprise was about to be abandoned. He saw himself, if he entered the war, confronted after a short interval not only with the Bulgarians but with the main body of the Turkish Army now chained to the Gallipoli Peninsula. He read in the British and French action a plain confession of impending failure in the main operation whose progress during the whole year had dominated the war situation in the east. It proved impossible to remove these anxieties from the Royal mind, and added to his German sympathies they were decisive. "His Majesty," said Sir Francis Elliot [October 6], "was disturbed by the fact that troops had been brought from the Dardanelles to Salonika. He thought that it was the beginning of the abandonment of the expedition and would release the whole Turkish Army to reinforce the Bulgarians."

King Constantine Dismisses Venizelos

While the troops were already on the way and the British Navy were netting the harbour of Salonika against submarines, King Constantine dismissed M. Venizelos, on whose invitation they had come. The Allies therefore found themselves confronted with a pro-German Greece determined to repudiate its treaty obligations to Serbia. Thus the object of the expedition to Salonika had entirely disappeared. But those powerful persons in France and England who had advocated it were determined to persevere. The miseries of Serbia fighting desperately against superior forces, the shame and sorrow of watching a small ally trampled down combined with dislike and weariness of the Dardanelles to form a tide of opinion impossible to resist.

I continued to point to the Dardanelles as the master key to the problem and a naval attempt to force the Straits as the sole chance of changing the action of Bulgaria and averting the destruction of Serbia. Even up to the last moment the arrival of a British Fleet in the Sea of Marmora might have transformed the situation. The Bulgarians having mobilized against one side, might have marched against the other. Mr. Balfour, however, although perfectly ready to bear the supreme responsibility of Admiral de Robeck and the First Sea Lord Sir Henry Jackson, had been willing to make the attempt, could not feel justified in overriding them or replacing them by others. It only remained, therefore, to wait the catastrophe.

The Advice of the Experts

The Cabinet found the hopelessness of the situation unendurable, and apparently the French Government was similarly distressed. A vehement wish to rush troops to the aid of Serbia manifested itself. It was in vain that the impossibility of their arriving before it was too late was explained. On Friday, October 6, after heated and confused discussions, the Cabinet decided to refer the tangled situation to

the considered judgment of the combined staffs of the Admiralty and the War Office. The great question—What to do? was accordingly remitted to the naval and military experts gathered together under the guidance of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff and the First Sea Lord.

Through the whole of Saturday and Sunday these officers considered and prepared their report, and on Monday, October 9, this remarkable document was circulated to Ministers. The General

Staff, in loyal accord with General Headquarters in France and with almost all orthodox military opinion, recommended that everything should be concentrated on the prolongation of the Battle of Loos, from which they considered decisive results might be obtained. In this they were proved wrong by the events not only of 1915, but of 1916 and of 1917. Although the British Army continued its operations with the fullest support and to the utmost limit of its ammunition, not only were they unable to break

the German line but a very large proportion of their initial gains were wrested from them by the German counter-attacks.

If Sir Douglas Haig with the enormous expenditure of munitions and life which characterized the battles on the Somme in 1916 or at Paschendaele in 1917 was unable to achieve any decisive results, what chance had Sir John French with the scanty offensive resources of 1915? The best and most orthodox military opinion was at this time so far out of touch with reality, that the General Staff



From a drawing by Christopher Clark

FIGHTING IN THE STREETS OF LOOS

The battle of Loos was remarkable in one respect. Here for the first time the men of Kitchener's Army were engaged in a major operation. Composed of the flower of the country's manhood the new troops fought with desperate valour. But here as later on the Somme, lives were squandered and men disabled for the sake of an advance that could have no real effect on the main issue.



From a painting by S. Breg.

FIGHTING NEAR THE TOWER BRIDGE

The glorious but futile advance of September 25 1915 now known as the Battle of Loos resulted in a comparatively small gain at heavy cost. Once more the futility of direct assaults upon a well armed and entrenched enemy was amply demonstrated. On the left of the above drawing is the famous Tower Bridge of Loos while to the right is Hill 70.

still contemplated the irruption of a mass of cavalry through the German line. What the cavalry would have done if they had got through was not explained.

The Cabinet Compromises

But passing from the general question of the offensive in France to the specific issues raised by the situation in the east, the General Staff of the Army and the Admiralty War Staff pronounced in no uncertain tones against the Salonika enterprise and in favour of a continuance of the operations at the Dardanelles. The advocates of Salonika had been those who had pressed most strongly for the remission of the disputed questions to the unbiased and undiluted judgment of the naval and military experts. They were completely indisposed to accept the pronouncement of the tribunal to which they had appealed.

When these matters came before the War Council (whose numbers had now been increased to include the prominent figures on both sides of the controversy)

on the evening of October 9, it was evident that no agreement could be reached as between Salonika and the Dardanelles. On the other hand, it was common ground that large reinforcements should be sent to the eastern theatre as soon as possible. As these troop movements would necessarily take several weeks, and it could be plausibly argued that the situation would develop in the meanwhile in such a way as to make ultimate concord possible, it was finally settled that six divisions should be withdrawn from France and sent to Egypt, and that what should happen to them after that should be settled later.

The Prime Minister felt himself constrained to agree to this arrangement. He was, in my opinion, throughout unwavering in his intention to persevere at the Dardanelles, and he used every resource of patience and tact to guide and carry opinion in that direction and to secure the necessary decisions at the earliest possible moment. A more vigorous course would probably have broken up the Government. I was, and am, strongly of opinion that it would

have been much better to break up the Cabinet, and let one section or the other carry out their view in its integrity, than to preserve what was called "the national unity" at the expense of vital executive action. But after that there would still have been the difficulty with the French

and practicability of the Salonika expedition, and had threatened to resign the command of the French armies if the British did not effectively co-operate. In spite of the strenuous resistance of the British General Staff, and in the flattest defiance of their advice, the Cabinet yielded to this outrageous threat.

The French Decision

The French Government had by this time made up their mind wholeheartedly in favour of Salonika. They declared their intention of sending General Sarrail's army thither instead of to the Dardanelles, and urged us to support them as strongly as possible. Another series of disputes therefore broke out in the Cabinet upon the proposal to divert to Salonika the troops now under orders for Egypt, and the consequent abandonment of any further great enterprise to open the Straits. Military authority was again appealed to, and the General Staff in a paper, every word of which was justified by subsequent events, showed that there was no possibility of saving the Serbians, and that the Salonika enterprise was a dangerous and futile dissipation and misdirection of forces.

Fortified by the unequivocal recommendation of all the military and naval authorities, the Cabinet refused to agree to the French proposals, and insisted upon the reinforcing British divisions being sent according to the agreement to Egypt, where they were to be fitted out with their semi-tropical equipment, etc.

On this General Joffre was sent by the French Government over to England. After his defeat in Champagne he was in no position to resist the strong tendencies of his Government, nor possibly particularly anxious to keep General Sarrail in Paris. He arrived, and in the absence of the Prime Minister, who was at this time temporarily incapacitated by illness, met the leading members of the Cabinet. I was excluded from this Conference, no doubt because it was known that I should certainly prove intractable. After the Conference was over the Cabinet was informed that General Joffre had pledged his military judgment in favour of the necessity

The Final Offer of the British Government

The final policy of the British Government, though erroneous in direction and too late in time, was not without its grandeur. On October 12 the following declaration was made both to Roumania and to Greece —

"The only effective manner in which help can be given to Serbia is by the immediate declaration of war by Roumania and Greece against the Austro-Germans and Bulgaria. The British Government in that event would be prepared to sign forthwith a Military Convention with Roumania, whereby Great Britain will guarantee to bring into action in the Balkan theatre, not including the forces already in Gallipoli, an army of at least 200,000 men. If the French send a force as they contemplate doing, that force would be part of this total, but if not, the British Government would undertake to provide the whole number themselves.

"This force would include a number of our best and most seasoned divisions, and we shall maintain them in the field waging war on behalf of our Allies until the objective is accomplished. A steady flow of troops will commence as soon as transport is available and will be continuously maintained. We estimate that 150,000 men will be available by the end of November, and the total 200,000 will be reached by the end of the year.

"The Military Convention will state precisely the dates at which the different portions of the army will arrive. We are repeating this offer to Greece, and if Roumania is prepared to act immediately, we shall call upon Greece imperatively to fulfil her treaty obligations to Serbia."

Such a spirit manifested three months earlier would have prevented the disasters by whose imminence it had been evoked. Such an army applied in August or September, either to the Gallipoli Peninsula or to the Asiatic shore, would have overpowered the Turks already extended at their fullest strain, and transformed defeat into victory throughout the east. But now these immense offers, not arising from foresight but extorted only by the pressure of events, fell upon deaf ears. Neither Roumania nor Greece would move an inch.

In these throes Sir Edward Carson resigned because of the failure to rescue Serbia, and M. Delcasse because of the attempt.

* * * *

The Storm Bursts on Serbia

On October 9 the storm of ruin burst upon the Balkans, and Mackensen,

crossing the Danube with nine German and Austrian divisions, entered Belgrade from the north. Two days later the Bulgarians invaded Serbia from the east. This double and converging attack was overwhelming. Uskub fell on October 22, and Nisb on November 2. In another month Monastir was captured, and by the middle of December the Serbian Army was destroyed or driven completely from Serbian soil.

The relentless severity of the Bulgarian pursuit exposed the retreating Serbian forces and population to the worst horrors of war and winter. Scores of thousands of defenceless people perished, and the whole country was ravaged and reduced to complete subjugation. Meanwhile, large Anglo-French forces began to accumulate at Salonika as helpless spectators of these events, the Allied Army on the Gallipoli Peninsula was left to rot, and the British Fleet at the Dardanelles remained motionless.



From the painting by C. H. Simpson. Copyright reserved for owners by Royal Academy Illustrated

THE SERBIAN RETREAT INTO ALBANIA

As described in the text the day of October 9 broke stormily for Serbia. This nation of soldiers so long enduring was at last overwhelmed. Nothing that the Serbians could do availed to stay Mackensen's invading tide, and before the end of the year the Serbian Army was no more.

CHAPTER LIII

THE ABANDONMENT OF THE DARDANELLES

Consequences—Recall of Sir Ian Hamilton—General Monro's Report—Effect on Lord Kitchener—Admiral von Usedom's Report to the German Emperor—Plans of Commodore Keyes and Rear-Admiral Wemyss—Outline of the Keyes Plan—The New War Committee—Lord Kitchener's Mission—I Resign from the Government—Confusion and Difficulties of the Times—A General View

THE events described in the last chapter led directly to the abandonment of the enterprise against the Dardanelles

Consequences

In the first place, the impending opening of through communications between Germany and Turkey seemed to offer to the Turks the prospect of large supplies of all kinds and particularly of heavy guns and ammunition. Our troops on the Peninsula, whose positions did not allow of any local withdrawal, were threatened with a very great increase in the hostile bombardment. Secondly, the Salonika expedition must become a serious rival to the Dardanelles, drawing upon the existing strength of a harassed army and intercepting and diverting reinforcements and supplies. Apprehensions of approaching failure, if not indeed of final disaster, were rife. Only the fear of a massacre on the Beaches and of the loss of a large proportion of the Army delayed for a time the evacuation of Gallipoli and the abandonment of the enterprise. As a first step, on October 11, Lord Kitchener telegraphed to Sir Ian Hamilton —

"What is your estimate of the probable loss which would be entailed to our forces if the evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula was decided upon and carried out in the most careful manner?"¹

Sir Ian Hamilton, who had already declared evacuation to be "unthinkable," replied on the 12th that—

¹ *Gallipoli Diary*, p. 249

"It would not be wise to reckon on getting out of Gallipoli with less loss than that of half the total force, as well as guns which must be used to the last, stores, railway plant, horses. We might be very lucky and lose considerably less than I have estimated."

Recall of Sir Ian Hamilton

On October 14 it was decided to recall Sir Ian Hamilton and to send out in his place General Monro, an officer who had already commanded an army in France and was deeply imbued with western ideas. He belonged to that school whose supreme conception of Great War strategy was "killing Germans." Anything that killed Germans was right. Anything that did not kill Germans was useless, even if it made other people kill them, and kill more of them, or terminated their power to kill us. To such minds the capture of Constantinople was an idle trophy, and the destruction of Turkey as a military factor, or the rallying of the Balkan States to the Allies, mere politics, which every military man should hold in proper scorn.

The special outlook of General Monro was not known to the Cabinet. His instructions were moreover exclusively military. He was to express an opinion whether the Gallipoli Peninsula should be evacuated, or another attempt made to carry it, and on the number of troops that would be required (1) to carry the Peninsula, (2) to keep the Straits open, and (3) to

take Constantinople¹ No reference was made to any part which might be played by the Fleet in this essentially amphibious operation Very large masses of troops were now moving from France to the eastern theatre, and the whole question of their employment was left open In these circumstances General Monro's report was awaited with the utmost anxiety

General Monro's Report

There was however no need for suspense General Monro was an officer of swift decision He came, he saw, he capitulated He reached the Dardanelles on October 28, and already on the 29th he and his staff were discussing nothing but evacuation On the 30th he landed on the Peninsula

Without going beyond the Beaches, he familiarized himself in the space of six hours with the conditions prevailing on the 15-mile front of Anzac, Suvla and Helles, and spoke a few discouraging words to the principal officers at each point To the Divisional Commanders summoned to meet him at their respective Corps Headquarters, he put separately and in turn a question in the following sense "On the supposition that you are going to get no more drafts can you maintain your position in spite of the arrival of strong reinforcements with heavy guns and limitless German ammunition?" He thus collected a number of dubious answers, armed with which he returned to Imbros He never again set foot on the Peninsula during the tenure of his command His Chief-of-the-Staff, also an enthusiast for evacuation never visited it at all

On October 31 General Monro despatched his telegram recommending the total evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula and the final abandonment of the campaign According to his own statement he contemplated, in addition to the ruin of the whole enterprise, a loss of from thirty to forty per cent of the army of about forty thousand officers and men This he was prepared to accept Two days later he left for Egypt leaving the command of the Dar-

¹ C. 1. 1. 2. C. C. Monro's Despatch, 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

danelles Army temporarily in the hands of General Birdwood

Effect on Lord Kitchener

General Monro's telegram of "Evacuation" fell like a thunderbolt upon Lord Kitchener, and for the moment and under the shock he rose in all the strength which he commanded when he represented the indomitable core of our national character

Lord Kitchener to General Birdwood

November 3, 1915

"Very secret

"You know the report sent in by Monro I shall come out to you, am leaving to-morrow night I have seen Captain Keyes, and I believe the Admiralty will agree to making naval attempt to force the passage of the Straits We must do what we can to assist them, and I think as soon as our ships are in the Sea of Marmora we should seize the Bular isthmus and hold it so as to supply the Navy if the Turks still hold out

"Examine very carefully the best position for landing near the marsh at the head of the Gulf of Xeros, so that we could get a line across the isthmus, with ships at both sides In order to find the troops for this undertaking we should have to reduce the numbers in the trenches to the lowest possible, and perhaps evacuate positions at Suvla All the best fighting men that could be spared, including your boys from Anzac and every one I can sweep up in Egypt, might be concentrated at Mudros ready for this enterprise

"There will probably be a change in the naval command, Wemyss being appointed in command to carry through the naval part of the work

"As regards the military command, you would have the whole force, and should carefully select your commanders and troops I would suggest Maude, Fanshawe, Marshall, Peyton, Godley, Cox, leaving others to hold the lines Please work out plans for this, or alternative plans as you may think best We must do it right this time

"I absolutely refuse to sign orders for evacuation, which I think would be

the gravest disaster and would condemn a large percentage of our men to death or imprisonment

"Monro will be appointed to the command of the Salonika force"

Here was the true Kitchener Here in this flaming telegram—whether Bulair was the best place or not—was the Man the British Empire believed him to be, in whom millions set their faith—resolute, self-reliant, creative, hon-hearted

Unhappily the next day —

Lord Kitchener to General Birdwood

November 4, 1915

"I am coming as arranged The more I look at the problem the less I see my way through, so you had better work out very quietly and secretly any scheme for getting the troops off the peninsula"

* * * *

Admiral von Usedom's Report to the German Emperor

We may now once again exercise our privilege of crossing to the enemy's lines and of learning how the situation was viewed by the responsible German authorities On the same October 31 that General Monro dispatched his tele-

gram of evacuation to Lord Kitchener, Admiral von Usedom who, it will be remembered, commanded the fortress of the Dardanelles and all the marine defences of the Straits, completed a despatch to the Emperor dealing with the events of the past month

"The great attack," he wrote, "which we have been expecting on the land front has not taken place since the advance inaugurated by the new landing on August 7 north of the Arburnu front was brought to a standstill At the end of September reports of moves of troops and vehicles increased Information from Salonika confirms that troops are being drawn thither from the Dardanelles front I do not, however, consider it probable that the enemy will evacuate his position without hard fighting In order to drive him out a very thorough artillery preparation is necessary, and for this the munitions on the spot or which can be brought up are insufficient"

He proceeded to dwell upon the dangerous manner in which the fortress defences of the Straits had been weakened through the repeated withdrawals of the mobile artillery, par-



Photo Imperial War Museum

GENERAL SIR IAN HAMILTON RECALLED

On October 14, 1915, it was decided to recall Sir Ian Hamilton to London, in order that the Cabinet might have the benefit of his views on the situation This photograph shows Sir Ian Hamilton taking leave of his staff on the morning of October 17, shortly before his departure for England

ticularly the howitzers, on which his whole system depended. In addition to the forty-nine howitzers and mobile guns with their supplies of ammunition withdrawn in May and June, he had during August and September been forced to cede another twenty-one of his most valuable howitzers and mobile guns. The whole of the vital intermediate Defences of the forts contained at this time only twenty mobile howitzers and mortars.

* * *

Plans of Commodore Keyes and Rear-Admiral Wemyss

Meanwhile Commodore Keyes, Chief of the Staff to Admiral de Robeck, could endure the position at the Dardanelles no longer. He had been throughout convinced that the Fleet could at any time with proper preparation force the Dardanelles and enter the Marmora in sufficient strength. During the summer detailed plans for this operation were prepared under his direction by the Naval Staff. These plans were now completed, and Commodore Keyes declared himself confident of their success. In this opinion he was most strongly supported by Rear-Admiral Wemyss.

This officer was actually senior to Admiral de Robeck, but in circumstances which have already been explained¹ he had accepted the position of Second-in-Command upon the eve of the action of March 18. The qualities of character and judgment which he displayed during the war were destined to raise him from a Rear-Admiral to the position of First Sea Lord. In this supreme capacity he was eventually to sustain the burden of

¹ See p. 61.



Photo Landy

GENERAL SIR CHARLES MONRO

Sir Charles Monro entered the Army in 1879 and on the outbreak of the Great War was appointed to the command of the 2nd Division with which he proceeded to France. In 1915 he commanded in succession the 1st Corps and later the Third Army. In October 1915 it was decided that he should go out to the Dardanelles in order that he might report upon the situation as he viewed it. General Monro accordingly proceeded thither and decided for evacuation.

the last fourteen months of the struggle. His opinion therefore is retrospectively invested with very high authority.

The joint representations of the Chief of Staff and of his Second-in-Command were not, however, acceptable to Admiral de Robeck. Commodore Keyes thereupon asked to be relieved of his appointment in order that he might return home and lay his plans before the Board of Admiralty. Admiral de Robeck, with a magnanimous gesture, asked him to retain his position and accorded him leave of absence, full

liberty and "a fair field" to state his case, making it clear, however, that he could not himself in any circumstances become responsible for a further naval attempt. Commodore Keyes therefore repaired to London forthwith, where he arrived on October 28.

Outline of the Keyes Plan

The Keyes plan was remarkable for its audacity. It discarded all the gradual methods around which it had alone been possible hitherto to rally naval opinion. The Fleet would be divided into four squadrons, three of which were to take part in the attack, while the fourth provided the support for the Army. The Second Squadron comprised about eight old battleships and cruisers, four very old battleships acting as supply ships, as many of the dummy battleships as possible, and a number of merchantmen carrying coal and ammunition. All these vessels were to be fitted with mine-bumpers.

Preceded by four of the best sweepers and accompanied by eight destroyers and two scouts, this Second Squadron was to enter the Straits shortly before dawn, keeping below the illuminated area until dawn was about to break, when it would proceed to steam through the Narrows at its utmost speed. Commodore Keyes proposed to take command of this squadron himself. It was his firm conviction that with the improved sweepers and the mine-bumpers, and aided by smoke screens, darkness and surprise, certainly more than half of this squadron would arrive above Nagara. The battleships which survived were immediately to attack the forts of the Narrows from their rear, which would have been completely exposed.

Meanwhile at dawn the First Squadron, composed of the *Lord Nelson*, *Agamemnon*, *Exmouth*, two *King Edwards*, four French ships, the *Glory* and the *Canopus*, accompanied by eight sloops and ten destroyers for sweeping, would simultaneously attack the forts at the Narrows from below the Kephez minefield. The Third Squadron, consisting of two Monitors, the *Swiftsure*, and five cruisers or light cruisers, was to cover the army and co-operate from

across the Peninsula in the attack upon the forts at the Narrows. The bombardment of the forts at the Narrows by all three squadrons, and the sweeping of the minefields already deranged by the passage of the Second Squadron, were to be pursued continuously without slackening for a moment.

An elaborate memorandum had been prepared by the staff, regulating every phase of this main attack which might well have been continued for two or even three days if necessary before the final advance of the First Squadron through the Narrows was ordered. In short, the Keyes plan was in principle the old plan of pinning down the forts in close and continuous action while the minefields were swept, but in addition, it was to be preceded by a furious will prize rush of the oldest vessels and locate the defence, to sweep them out a up the minefields and secure separation is whence the forts could bring up munitions reverse brought up.

"The action recommended (staff memorandum)," wrote the Keyes, "taken in conjunction with the preliminary rush and defence, has been a military offensive, generally regarded with the views of a number of experienced officers who strongly advocated naval attack on the Straits as confident of success. If successful, the Turkish Army at the Bosphorus will be entirely dependent on the Bosphorus for supplies. This of communication can be harassed and night." Finally the plan comprised detailed arrangements for maintaining the successful ships in the Marmora while they were operating against the Turkish communications.

The New War Committee

On November 2 the Prime Minister reconstituted the War Council or Dardanelles Committee as it had hitherto been styled. In its new form it was called the "War Committee" and was limited to the Prime Minister, Mr. Balfour, Lord Kitchener, Sir Edward Grey and Mr. Lloyd George. Mr. Bonar Law was added ten days later under

Conservative pressure I was excluded. It was announced that this Committee would be responsible to the Cabinet for the whole direction of the war.

On November 3 the new Committee met to consider the question of evacuating the Dardanelles. Lord Kitchener's views have been fully exposed in his telegram to General Birdwood of that day. He had previously telegraphed to General Monro asking whether his opinions were shared by the Corps Commanders on the Peninsula. He had been answered that General Byng favoured evacuation and considered that Smyrna could be evacuated without much loss, provided the attempt were made before German reinforcements arrived, that General Davies, commanding at Helles, concurred with General Monro, but that General Birdwood at Anzac was opposed to evacuation. General Maxwell, commanding in Egypt, had also independently telegraphed urging that a further effort should be made to hold on. Thus the military opinions were divided.

The Committee had also before them the plans of Commodore Keyes, endorsed by Admiral Wemyss, in regard to which the Admiralty War Staff had pronounced no decided opinion. Keyes was still only a Captain with the rank of Commodore. He was known as a daring and gifted officer, he had no record of high command over him, and he did not carry the authority necessary to override Admiral Robeck's negative view. Could he at this juncture, with the fame of the hero of the Dover patrol, have laid before the Council Table the credentials of courage, the history of the Great War might have been much curtailed.

Kitchener's Mission

In the circumstances which existed the War Committee found no difficulty in agreeing to postpone the evil day of the Dardanelles. Lord Kitchener proceeded to the Dardanelles to survey the situation on the spot and make further recommendations. The Secretary of State for War left London on November 4, and was apparently in great sympathy with Commodore Keyes's plan. He spoke on

his way through Paris in an exceedingly resolute manner, and directed Commodore Keyes to explain the scheme to the French Minister of Marine, now Admiral Lacaze, and then follow him with all speed. Admiral Lacaze was wholly favourable to the plan, and immediately promised a reinforcement of six old French battleships to execute it.

Lord Kitchener arrived at the Dardanelles on November 9. His personal inspection of the troops and the defences convinced him that the troops could hold their positions unless confronted with very heavy German reinforcements of which there was no immediate prospect. His conferences with Admiral de Robeck led him, however, in the absence of Commodore Keyes, to discard the idea of a renewed naval attempt. Instead he devised a plan for a new landing at Ajaz in the Gulf of Alexandretta, with the double object of barring the path of a Turkish invasion of Egypt and of covering the effects of an impending withdrawal from Gallipoli.

This plan did not commend itself either to the Admiralty or to the War Committee. With Salonika as well as the Dardanelles on their hands, they were naturally reluctant to commit themselves to another new and entirely separate enterprise which could at the best only achieve subsidiary objects. They therefore informed Lord Kitchener of their dissent from his views and announced that they had decided that the final decision about Gallipoli was to be relegated to a Conference to be held in Paris a few days later.

* * *

I Resign from the Government

In accepting an office in the new Government after leaving the Admiralty at the end of May, I had been actuated by the feeling that it was my duty to sustain the Dardanelles enterprise to the best of my ability, and by the hope that with a seat on the War Council I should be able to do so. It was on this condition alone that I had found it possible to occupy a sinecure office. That condition had now disappeared. I was out

bility for what I believed to be a wholly erroneous conception of war. I therefore in the middle of November sought permission to retire from the Government.

It was impossible at that time to discuss in Parliament any of the grave and tormenting controversies which these pages expose. I had nothing but the friendliest personal feelings towards my colleagues and the Prime Minister, and I would not speak a word which might add to their difficulties or those of the State. I was content to base myself upon a desire to relinquish a well-paid sinecure office which I could not bear longer to hold at this sad juncture in our affairs.

Confusion and Difficulties of the Times

I have tried to show what I believe to be the interplay of forces and sequence of events in this tragedy. Masses of documents can be produced which illustrate and elaborate all the

phases of the story, and there are many minor episodes which it would have been only confusing to include. But from what has been written, the appalling difficulties and cruel embarrassments of those who, whatever their views, were endeavouring loyally and earnestly to discharge their great responsibilities can be readily understood.

I have recorded my counsels at the time. The future was then unknown. No one possessed plenary power. The experts were frequently wrong. The politicians were frequently right. The wishes of foreign Governments, themselves convulsed internally by difficulties the counterpart of our own, were constantly thrusting themselves athwart our policy. Without the title deeds of positive achievement no one had the power to give clear brutal orders which would command unquestioning respect. Power was widely disseminated among the many important personages who in this period



CLOSE TO THE TURKISH LINES

Lord Kitchener did not confine his tour of inspection to the beaches of Gallipoli. He visited in turn the various sectors and studied the Turkish positions from such points of vantage as were available. In this photograph (second from the right) is observing the Turkish lines from a first line trench at Anzac.

Photo Central News

formed the governing instrument Knowledge was very unequally shared Innumerable arguments of a partial character could be quoted on every side of all these complicated questions The situation itself was in constant and violent movement We never at any time regained the initiative, we were always compelled to adapt ourselves to events We could never overtake or forestall them All the time, clear and simple solutions existed which would speedily have produced the precious element of victory

A General View

I may perhaps close this chapter by reprinting some words of general import which I used in explaining my resignation to the House of Commons —

There is no reason to be discouraged about the progress of the war We are passing through a bad time now and it will probably be worse before it is better, but that it will be better, if we only endure and persevere, I have no doubt whatever The old wars were decided by their episodes rather than by their tendencies In this war the tendencies are far more important than the episodes Without winning any sensational victories we may win this

war We may win it even during a continuance of extremely disappointing and vexatious events It is not necessary for us in order to win the war to push the German lines back over all the territory they have absorbed, or to pierce them While the German lines extend far beyond her frontiers, and while her flag flies over conquered capitals and subjugated provinces, while all the appearances of military success attend her arms, Germany may be defeated more fatally in the second or third year of the war than if the Allied Armies had entered Berlin in the first

It is, no doubt, disconcerting for us to observe that the Government of a State like Bulgaria are convinced on an impartial survey of the chances that victory will rest with the Central Powers All the small States are hypnotized by German military pomp and precision They see the glitter, the episode, but they do not see or realize the capacity of the ancient and mighty nations, against whom Germany is warring, to endure adversity, to put up with disappointments and mismanagement, to recreate and renew their strength, and to pass on with boundless obstinacy through boundless sufferings to the achievement of their cause



LANDING A HEAVY GUN AT HELLES

The difficulties experienced in landing a heavy piece of artillery at Cape Helles are admirably conveyed by this photograph A long column of men from the Royal Navy and the Royal Naval Division are no more than sufficient to haul the gun through the yielding sands of the shore

Photo. Copyright

CHAPTER LIV

THE CONSEQUENCES OF 1915

A Reflection—Final Stages of Gallipoli—Admiral Wemyss's Effort—Struts of the Turks—Final Decision to Evacuate—Admiral Wemyss's Telegram of December 8—The Government Inflexible—Successful Evacuation of the Evacuation—Consequences—The Revival of Turkey—Russia—The Waning Prestige of Lord Kitchener—Sir William Robertson—A Chain of Missed Chances—The War of Exhaustion

THE closing scenes at the Dardanelles proceeded while I was serving with the 2nd Battalion of the Grenadier Guards near Laventie. I was not without information on the course of affairs from my friends both in the Cabinet and at General Headquarters. It was a comfort to be with these fine troops at such a time, to study their methods, unsurpassed in the army, of discipline and trench warfare, and to share from day to day their life under the hard conditions of the winter and the fire of the enemy. The kindness with which I was received during my period of instruction with the Guards Division will ever be gratefully remembered by me.

A Reflection

As in the shades of a November evening, I for the first time led a platoon of Grenadiers across the sopping fields which gave access to our trenches, while here and there the bright flashes of the guns or the occasional whistle of a random bullet accompanied our path, the conviction came into my mind with absolute assurance that the simple soldiers and their regimental officers, armed with their cause, would by their virtues in the end retrieve the mistakes and ignorances of Staffs and Cabinets, of Admirals, Generals and politicians—including, no doubt, many of my own. But, alas, at what a needless cost! To how many slaughters, through what endless months of fortitude and privation would these men, themselves already the survivors of

many a bloody day, be made to plod before victory was won!

* * * *

Final Stages of Gallipoli

On November 22, Lord Kitchener, his Ayas Bay project being vetoed, consented to the evacuation of Suvla and Anzac. He still hoped to save Helles, the retention of which was strongly advocated by Admiral de Robeck. The War Committee, however, decided that all three lodgments should be abandoned. With this decision Admiral de Robeck expressed himself in discord. He deprecated the evacuation of Suvla and Anzac, and when asked specifically on November 25 if he concurred in the evacuation of Helles, he observed bluntly that "he could not understand it." The situation cannot, however, be disentangled from his attitude towards the use of the Fleet. His health was now temporarily impaired by his long spell of hard work. He started immediately for home on a period of leave.

Admiral Wemyss's Effort

The command now devolved upon Admiral Wemyss. The new Naval Commander-in-Chief, undeterred by past events, bent himself to a last effort to retrieve the situation. In a series of telegrams, he emphasized the dangers of a winter evacuation. He dwelt upon its difficulties, he endorsed the estimate of General Monro that 30 per cent of the force would be lost in evacuation, he urged that one more effort should

be made to convert defeat into victory. In a spirit which cannot be censured in the Royal Navy, he asserted that the Fleet would do its part, and that even if the Army could not co-operate, he would carry out the Keyes plan and force the Dardanelles by naval power alone.

These stalwart counsels threw everything again into the melting pot. The

Cabinet revolted against the decision of their new War Committee. It was resolved that no decision could be taken without a further conference with the French, and a meeting of the new Allied Standing Council was fixed for December 5 at Calais. Lord Kitchener again took heart. In common with the British General Staff he was strongly opposed to the whole Salonica expedition. On December 2 he telegraphed to General Monro —

Private and Secret

The Cabinet has been considering the Gallipoli situation all day. Owing to the political consequences, there is a strong feeling against evacuation, even of a partial character. It is the general opinion we should retain Cape Helles.

If the Salonica troops are placed at your disposal up to four divisions for an offensive operation to improve the position at Suvla, could such operations be carried out in time with a view to making Suvla retailable by obtaining higher position and greater depth? The Navy will also take the offensive in co-operation

* * *

Straits of the Turks

Meanwhile the activities of the British submarines in the Marmora had almost entirely severed the sea communications of the Turkish Army, and were also impeding their supply by the roads along the Marmora shore. To meet this peril, which had been approaching plainly, steadily and rapidly during the last two or three months, the German Staff had built a new branch railway from the main Turkish system to Kavak at the head of the Gulf of Xeros. Thus had



Photo Elliott & Fry

ADMIRAL LORD WESTER WEMYSS

Admiral R. E. Wemyss as he then was commanded the base at Mudros during the greater period of the Dardanelles campaign. Attention has already been drawn in the text (p. 611) to the public spirit displayed by this officer when on the illness of Admiral Carden he at once agreed to serve under Admiral de Robeck, although senior to him in substantive rank. When in the closing months of 1915 official opinion in England was steadily hardening against the great adventure at the Dardanelles, Admiral Wemyss declared himself prepared to force the Straits. Had the permission he sought been granted to him it can hardly be doubted that this resolute leader would have been successful in brushing aside the few remaining obstacles which at this stage were all that the Turks could strew in his path.

been finished in the nick of time, and as the sea transport failed, it became the sole line of supply, relief or reinforcement for the twenty Turkish divisions on the Peninsula. From the new rail head at Kavak all transport was by bullock wagon or camel along roads across the Bulair Isthmus which were frequently disturbed by the fire of the Fleet. On December 2, Admiral Wemyss succeeded in destroying the three central spans of the Kavak Bridge by fire from the *Agamemnon*, *Endymion*, and a Monitor. The road was also so badly broken by the bombardment that wheeled traffic was completely interrupted.

The Turkish 5th Army was now in serious straits. The British Intelligence reported growing demoralization of the enemy through losses, disease, stringency of supplies, the severe weather, and the increasingly searching character of the naval fire. We know now that these reports were correct. Food, clothes, boots, ammunition were frightfully scarce. The condition of the Turkish soldiers, often bare-footed, ragged, hungry, clinging to their trenches week after week, excited at this time the sympathy as well as the alarm of their German masters. Count Metternich, then German Ambassador at Constantinople, visited the Turkish lines on the Peninsula in December in company with Liman von Sanders. "If you had only known," he said, discussing these events after the war, "what the state of the Turkish Army was, it would have gone hard with us." It was



Photo. Imperial War Museum

ANTI-AIRCRAFT MACHINE GUN

A photograph taken in the French sector at Helles showing an anti aircraft machine gun team about to open fire on an approaching Turkish aeroplane. Troops in the rear areas at Helles suffered not a little from the activities of hostile planes spotting for their gunners. In consequence of this, every possible step was taken to harass enemy planes and to prevent their observers from obtaining information concerning movements or concentrations of troops.

not, however, knowledge that was lacking, but the collective will-power to turn it to account.

Final Decision to Evacuate

Admiral Wemyss and his staff were now confident that they had the power, even without forcing the Straits, not only to prevent the arrival of German artillery reinforcements on a large scale, but also gravely to compromise the existence of the whole Turkish Army on the Gallipoli Peninsula. Thus on the spot hope flared up again. It was at this moment, when for the first



GULLY RAVINE

Photo Imperial War Museum

One of the most prominent features of the Helles landscape, Gully Ravine was as its name infers a deep nullah or watercourse the bed of which in the summer was dry and sandy. It ran in a north easterly direction towards Krithia passing to the westward of that much coveted village. Here the Indian Brigade and the 29th Division were frequently in action, particularly on June 4 and 28, 1915. Both the British and Turkish lines ran astride of the ravine some distance south of Krithia.

time a strong and competent naval command declared itself positive of success, that the improvident decision to evacuate was finally taken. On December 8 the Joint Staff Conference sitting at the French General Headquarters declared unanimously for the immediate organization of the defence of Salonica and for the immediate evacuation of Gallipoli. From this moment the perplexities of the British Government came to an end. Henceforward they remained steadfast in pusillanimous resolve.

Admiral Wemyss's Telegram of December 8

Admiral Wemyss, however, with Keyes at his side, did not readily yield, and the struggle of these two sailors against the now marshalled force of the Cabinet, the War Committee, the Joint Anglo-French Conference, the Admiralty and the War Office, constitutes an episode on which perhaps in future years British naval historians will be glad to dwell. His telegram of December 8 at least must in justice to the Royal Navy be quoted here —

"The navy is prepared to force the Straits and control them for an inde-

finite period, cutting off all Turkish supplies which now find their way to the Peninsula either by sea from the Marmora or across the Dardanelles from Asiatic to European shore. The only line of communications left would be the road along the Isthmus of Bulair, which can be controlled almost entirely from the Sea of Marmora and the Gulf of Xeros. What is offered the Army, therefore, is the practical, complete severance of all Turkish lines of communication, accompanied by the destruction of the large supply depots on the shore of the Dardanelles.

"In the first instance I strongly advocated that the naval attack should synchronize with an army offensive, and if the Army will be prepared to attack in the event of a favourable opportunity presenting itself, nothing more need be required of them. The Navy here is prepared to undertake this operation with every assurance of success. If the units as described in your letter of November 24 can be provided, these hopes of success are greatly increased, and the possible losses greatly diminished.

"The unanimous military opinion referred to in Admiralty telegram

No 422 has, I feel certain, been greatly influenced, and naturally so, by the military appreciations of Sir Charles Monro. These I have not seen, but their purport I have gathered in course of conversations. The Corps Commanders, I know, view the evacuation with the greatest misgiving. The forcing of the Dardanelles, as outlined in my telegrams, has never been put before them, and I am convinced that, after considering the certain results which would follow a naval success, they would favour an attack on the lines indicated, especially in view of the undoubted low morale of the Turkish Peninsular army, of which we have ample evidence.

* * * *

"The very extensive German propaganda being pursued all over the Near East, accompanied by the expenditure

of vast sums of money, is not, I feel convinced, being undertaken merely as a side issue to the European war.

"A position of stalemate on both fronts of the principal theatres of war appears the natural outcome of present situation. This opinion is freely expressed in the higher military circles in Greece, and would therefore appear to be fostered by the Germans—a significant point.

"By surrendering our position here, when within sight of victory, we are aiding enemy to obtain markets the possession of which may enable her to outlast the Allies in the war of exhaustion now commencing.

"A successful attack would once and for all disperse those clouds of doubt, a large amount of shipping would be released and the question of Greece and Egypt settled.

"I do not know what has been



GULLY RAVINE AS WINTER SET IN

Photo Imperial War Museum

To the many discomforts of the troops on the Peninsula the coming of winter and the storms of November 1915 added cold wet and mud. This photograph is evidence of the change wrought upon the erstwhile sandy bottom of Gully Ravine. Where the going had been dusty and dry horse transport is now seen to be ploughing its way through deep mud.

decided about Constantinople, but if the Turks could be told that we were in the Marmora to prevent its occupation by the Germans, such a course would inevitably lead to disruption, and therefore weakness amongst them.

"I fear the effect on the Navy would be bad.

"Although no word of attack has passed my lips except to my immediate staff and admirals, I feel sure that every officer and man would feel that the campaign had been abandoned without sufficient use having been made of our greatest force, viz the Navy.

"The position is so critical that there is no time for standing on ceremony, and I suggest that General Birdwood, the officer who would now have to carry out the attack or evacuation which is now ordered, be asked for his appreciation.

"The logical conclusion, therefore, is the choice of evacuation or forcing the Straits. I consider the former disastrous tactically and strategically, and the latter feasible, and, so long as troops remain at Anzac, decisive.

"I am convinced that the time is ripe for a vigorous offensive, and I am confident of success."

The Government Inflexible

On August 18 the Admiralty had telegraphed to Admiral de Robeck authorizing and implicitly urging him to use the old battleships of the Fleet to force the Dardanelles, and Admiral de Robeck had declined. Now the conditions were reversed. On December 10 the same Board of Admiralty replied that they were not prepared to authorize the attempt by the Navy single-handed to force the Narrows. This sombre veto was final.

The risks that men are prepared to run in relation to circumstances present some of the strangest manifestations of psychology. One title of the hardihood they display to escape disaster, would often certainly achieve success. Contrast, for instance, the alternative hazards now presented to the British Government and Admiralty on the one hand, the chance, even the probability according to all expert opinion, of

losing 40,000 men in an evacuation, which if successful could only result in the total loss of the campaign, on the other, the chance of losing a squadron of old ships, and a small number of men in an operation which if successful would carry the campaign at a stroke from disaster to triumph. Yet we see Cabinet and Admiralty able to face the first alternative, and shrink from the second. While time is young, while prospects are favourable, while prizes inestimable may be gained, caution, hesitancy, half measures rule and fetter action. The grim afternoon of adverse struggle alone brings the hour of desperate resolve. The hopeful positive is rejected while all may be gained, the awful negative is embraced when nought but escape remains in view, and the energy and conviction which might have commanded victory are lavished upon the mere processes of flight.

The determination of the British Government to give in at all costs was now inflexible. The orders for the evacuation of Suvla and Anzac were reiterated by the Admiralty. On December 12, Admiral Wemyss bowed to those orders "with the greatest regret and misgiving." The plan for the evacuation, upon which a month's careful labour had been expended, was now completed, and the Admiral fixed the night of December 19 or 20 as the date of the operation.

Hope died hard. In ordering the evacuation of Suvla and Anzac the Government had consented to the retention for the time being of Helles which, while it was held, kept open the possibility of a renewed naval attack. In order to make Helles secure, the Admiral, in full accord with General Davies, commanding at Helles, elaborated plans for a combined attack by the Fleet and Army upon Achi Baba. The control and direction of the naval fire from the Monitors and the hulged "Edgars" had now been brought to a very high degree of efficiency. "Co-operation in an attack," wrote General Davies, "has now become a practical reality." Both the naval and military Commanders on the spot were therefore in complete agreement.

It is not necessary to pronounce upon the prospects of such an operation, for at this moment General Monro returned from Salonica where after his one day's visit to the Peninsula and his sojourn in Egypt he had been residing. Already on December 1 he had forbidden General Birdwood and the Corps Commanders to confer with the Admiral without his permission. On the 10th he peremptorily forbade General Birdwood to discuss any military matter with the Admiral. On the 14th he telegraphed home dissociating himself from the Admiral's views and protesting against any expression of opinion by Admiral Wemyss upon military matters. He agreed, however, with the naval and local military view that Helles could not be held indefinitely without Achi Baba. Thus at last, since the capture of Achi Baba was deemed impossible, the decision was reached for the total evacuation of the Peninsula.

* * * *

Successful Execution of the Evacuation

It was with melancholy but intense relief that I learned in France of the successful and bloodless execution of this critical operation which was accomplished on the night of December 19. The utmost credit belongs to the naval and military officers who perfected in exact detail the arrangements, and to the Admirals and Generals by whom they were so successfully carried out. The weather, on which all depended, was favourable for exactly the vital forty-eight hours, and the Turks were utterly unsuspecting. Indeed, when dawn broke on empty trenches and famous positions, bought at so terrible a cost, now silent as the graves with which they were surrounded, the haggard Turkish soldiers and their undaunted chiefs could hardly believe their eyes. Their position, and that of their country whose capital they had defended with soldierly tenacity, were now translated at a stroke from extreme jeopardy into renewed and resuscitated power.

Conviction, determination and the will to win, steadfastly maintained by their

High Command, had brought victory to the defence in spite of their inferiority in numbers and in resources of all kinds and of the inherent strategic perils of their position. The lack of these qualities on our side at the summit of power had defrauded the attackers of the reward, pregnant in its consequences to the whole world, to which their overwhelming potential strength and resources, their actual number and apparatus, their daring, their devotion and their fearful sacrifices had given them the right.

The evacuation of Helles was performed with equal skill and with equal good fortune on January 8, and the story of the Dardanelles came finally to an end. This consummation was acclaimed by the shallow and the uninstructed as if it had been a victory.

* * * *

Consequences

It is necessary however not only to relate the immediate sequel, but to outline the vast consequences which flowed from these events.

The campaign of the Dardanelles had been starved and crippled at every stage by the continued opposition of the French and British High Commands in France to the withdrawal of troops and munitions from the main theatre of the war. The abandonment of the Dardanelles led to the diversion of the Allied military forces on a scale far larger than its most ardent advocates had ever contemplated. Serbia had been destroyed, Bulgaria had joined our enemies, Roumania and Greece lay frozen in a terrorized neutrality. But still, as long as the British flag flew on the Peninsula and the British Fleet lay off the Straits, the main power of Turkey was gripped and paralysed. The evacuation set free twenty Turkish divisions on the Peninsula, and Turkey henceforth was able to form a common front with the Bulgarians in Thrace, to attack Russia, to aid Austria, to overawe Roumania. Turkey was also placed in a position simultaneously to threaten Egypt and to reinforce Mesopotamia.



PREPARING FOR THE EVACUATION A SCEN

The plans for the evacuation at Suvla Bay and Anzac were drawn up with the greatest possible war material was left to lull any suspicions too empty beaches might have aroused. The attack upon the Turks, whom they regarded as beaten men. I hope said one of them marching

The thirteen evacuated British divisions,¹ having been rested and refitted, were required to guard against the last two of these new dangers. The whole of the new army sent by France and Britain from the French theatre, amounting to seven additional divisions, was assigned to the defence of Salonica. Apart from the Anzacs, scarcely any of these twenty divisions of Allied troops ever fought against the Germans during the rest of the war.

Scarcely one came into any direct contact with any enemy for nearly six months, and during the same period thirteen out of the twenty liberated Turkish divisions were added to the hostile strength in other theatres. Eleven went to the Caucasus and two to Galicia, in both cases adding to the burden which Russia had to bear. Thus the first fruits of the evacuation of Gallipoli may be variously computed at a total loss of strength to the Allies of from thirty to forty divisions, half the army of a first-class power. It was

evident that a very grave prolongation of the war must arise from this cause alone.

The Revival of Turkey

From the moment when the grip on the heart of the Turkish Empire was relaxed, and breathing space was given, its widespread limbs under German stimulation regained and developed their power.

The three campaigns which had either begun or were imminent from Salonica, from Egypt, or in Mesopotamia, all grew rapidly into very great undertakings, and all continued until the last day of the war to make enormous drains upon the British resources and, to a lesser degree, upon those of France.

* * * *

Russia

There ended with the Dardanelles all hope of forming direct and continuous contact with Russia. A railway 1,200 miles long might be built to Murmansk, Vladivostock might continue to pass

¹ The French Corps had already gone

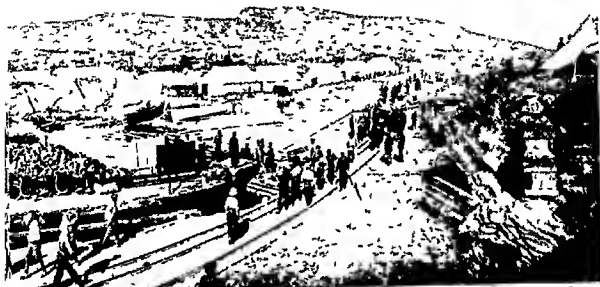


Photo Imperial War Museum

AT A WEST BEACH SUVA BAY

care and precision. Guns and stores of every kind were collected and evacuated while enough went about their duties as usual and at Anzac there were some who would have welcomed another General Hurdwood on the last morning as he pointed to a cemetery, I hope they won't hear us the beach

supplies across a distance of 4,000 miles, but the intimate co-operation in men and munitions, the vast exportation of South Russian wheat, the expansion of a vitalizing trade, which could alone spring from the opening of the Black Sea, was for ever denied us.

The abandonment of Gallipoli dispelled the Russian dream. In her darkest hours, under the flail of Ludendorff, driven out of Poland, driven out of Galicia, her armies enduring disaster and facing death often without arms, the cost of living rising continually throughout her vast, secluded Empire, Russia had cheered herself by dwelling on the great prize of Constantinople. A profound chill spread through all ranks of the Russian people, and with it came suspicion no less deep-seated. England had not really tried to force the Straits. From the moment when she had conceded the Russian claim to Constantinople, she had not been single-hearted, she had lost her interest in the enterprise. Her unfirm action and divided counsels arose from secret motives hidden in the bosom of the

State. And this while Russia was pouring out her blood as no race had ever done since men waged war.

Such were the whispers which, winged by skilful German propaganda, spread far and wide through the Czar's dominions, and in their wake every subversive influence gained in power. Lastly, the now inevitable prolongation of the struggle was destined to prove fatal to Russia. In the war of exhaustion to which we were finally condemned, which was indeed extolled as the last revelation of military wisdom, Russia was to be the first to fall, and in her fall to open upon herself a tide of ruin in which perhaps a score of millions of human beings have been engulfed. The consequences of these events abide with us to-day. They will darken the world for our children's children.

* * * *

The Waning Prestige of Lord Kitchener

The failure of the Dardanelles Expedition was fatal to Lord Kitchener. During the whole of 1915 he had been in sole and plenary charge of the British

military operations, and until November on every important point his will had been obeyed. The new Cabinet, like the leading members of the old, had now in their turn lost confidence in his war direction. The conduct of the Gallipoli campaign showed only too plainly the limitations of this great figure at this period of his life and in this tremendous situation both as an organiser and a man of action. His advocacy of the offensive in France which had failed so conspicuously at Loos and in Champagne was upon record. Under the agony of the Gallipoli evacuation his will power had plainly crumpled, and the long series of contradictory resolves which had marked his treatment of this terrible question was obvious to all who knew the facts.

Already, in November, had come direct rebuff. His plan for a fresh landing in the Gulf of Alexandretta, though devised by him in the actual theatre of operations, had been decisively vetoed by the new War Committee of the Cabinet and by the Allies in conference. In a series of telegrams the inclination of which could scarcely be obscure, he was encouraged to transform his definite mission at the Dardanelles into a general and extensive tour of inspection in the East. His prompt return to London showed that he was not himself unaware of the change in his position.

The disposition of the British forces in the east which he made after the evacuation of Suvla and Anzac was certainly not such as to retrieve a waning prestige. It was natural that Egypt should loom disproportionately large in his mind. Almost his whole life had been spent and his fame won there. He now saw this beloved country menaced, as he believed, by an imminent Turkish invasion on a large scale. In an endeavour to ward off the imaginary peril he crowded division after division into Egypt, and evidently contemplated desperate struggles for the defence of the Suez Canal at no distant date.

In the early days, at the end of 1914 and beginning of 1915, it had been worth while for a score of thousand Turks to threaten the Canal and create as much

disturbance as possible in order to delay the movement of troops from India, Australia and New Zealand to the European battlefield. But both the usefulness and feasibility of such an operation were destroyed by the great increase in the scale of the war in the eastern Mediterranean theatre which had been in progress during the whole year. The German and Turkish staffs were well content to rely upon threats and boasting, and to make the proclamation of their intention a substitute for the diversion of armies. "Egypt," exclaimed Enver Pasha in December, "is our objective", and following this simple deception the British concentration in Egypt was vehemently pursued.

On the top of this came the reverse in Mesopotamia, for which Lord Kitchener had no direct responsibility. General Townshend had marched on Baghdad, and the War Committee was led to believe that he was himself the mainspring of the enterprise. General Nixon, the Commander-in-Chief in Mesopotamia, had not informed them that his audacious and hitherto brilliantly successful subordinate had in writing recorded his misgivings about the operation. In the event Townshend's force of about 20,000 men was on November 25 forced to retreat after a well-contested action at Ctesiphon and only escaped by a swift and disastrous retreat to a temporary refuge at Kut.

Sir William Robertson

On December 3 the War Committee determined to recreate the Imperial General Staff at the War Office in an effective form. The decision was drastic. The experiment of making a Field-Marshal Secretary of State for War had run its full course. Lord Kitchener might still hold the Seals of Office, but his power, hitherto so overwhelming that it had absorbed and embodied the authority alike of the ministerial and the professional Chief, was now to be confined within limits which few politicians would accept in a Secretaryship of State. Sir William Robertson, Chief of the General Staff in France, was brought to Whitehall, and an Order in Council was issued establishing his

rights and responsibility in terms both strict and wide Lord Kitchener acquiesced in the abrogation, not only of the exceptional personal powers which he had enjoyed, but of those which have always been inherent in the office which he retained

The end of his great story is approaching the long life full of action, lighted by hard-won achievement, crowned by power such as a British subject had rarely wielded and all the regard and honour that Britain and her Empire can bestow, was now declining through the shadows. The sudden onrush of the night, the deep waters of the north, were destined to preserve him and his renown from the shadows

'Better to sink
beneath the
shock
Than moulder
puccineal on
the rock.'

The solemn days when he stood forth as Constable of Britain, beneath whose arm her untrained people braced themselves for war

were ended His life of duty could only reach its consummation in a warrior's death His record in the Great War as strategist, administrator and leader, will be judged by the eyes of other generations than our own Let us hope they will also remember



FIELD MARSHAL SIR WILLIAM ROBERTSON

Photo Zafajete

Of Sir William Robertson it may be said that he was one of the most remarkable men who ever served in the British Army. Enlisting as a trooper in the 16th Lancers in 1877 he rose through all the non-commissioned grades until in 1885 he was promoted troop-sergeant-major. He became a second-lieutenant three years later and was posted to the 3rd Dragoon Guards. A man of exceptional ability, he entered the Staff College at Camberley in 1896 being the first ranker to do so. In 1914 Sir William Robertson was Q.M.G. with the Expeditionary Force in France and later in 1915 went to the War Office as Chief of the Imperial General Staff. In 1920 he was created a Field-Marshal, the only British soldier to rise from the lowest to the highest rank.

the comfort his character and personality gave to his countrymen in their hours of hardest trial

* * * *

A Chain of Missed Chances

It is impossible to assemble the long chain of fatal missed chances which prevented the forcing of the Dardanelles without experiencing a sense of awe. One sees in retrospect at least a dozen situations all beyond the control of the enemy, any one of which, decided differently, would have ensured success. If we had known when it was resolved to make the naval attack that an army would be available and would be given, a surprise combined naval and military attack upon the Gallipoli Peninsula would have been decided upon and backed with good-will. If an army had never been sent, the Navy with its mine-sweeping service well organized would

have resumed its efforts after the check on March 18, and had it resumed, it would soon have exhausted the ammunition in the Turkish forts and swept the minefields. Had the dispatch of the 29th Division not been countermanded on February 20, or had it been packed in the transports in readiness to fight on disembarkation, Sir Ian Hamilton would have attacked the Gallipoli Peninsula almost immediately after March 18 and would, in that event, have found it ill-defended.

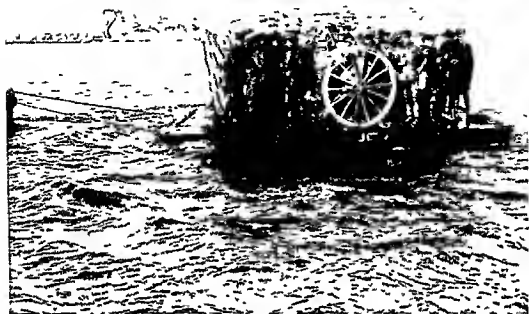
The battles of June and July were all critical in the last degree. Any substantial addition to the attack would have been decisive. The paralysis of the Executive during the formation of the Coalition Government in May, delayed for six weeks the arrival of the British reinforcements, and enabled the Turks to double the strength of their army. Thus the favourable moment at



Photo Imperial War Museum

LOADED "BEETLES" AT SUVLA BAY

The steel-plated motor-lighters which, as described in the text, were employed at Suvla Bay during the landing of the infantry were again used at the evacuation. They are seen here loaded with stores twenty-four hours before the final scene. Known as 'beetles,' the lighters were bullet-proof, and were designed to carry five hundred men. They could make a speed of five knots



GETTING A GUN AWAY

Photo Imperial War Museum

The problems and difficulties confronting those responsible for evacuating the army on Gallipoli were many and varied. Many and varied were the devices employed to overcome them. Here a raft is seen being towed away from Suvla Bay loaded with gun limber and personnel. Had the brains and energy responsible for the scheme of evacuation been available on the beach at Suvla Bay on the morning of August 8, 1915, Liman von Sanders's reinforcements from Bulair would have made their forced march in vain.

the beginning of July was thrown away. The Battle of Suvla Bay in August was marked by a combination of evil happenings extraordinary among the hazards of war. The story of the IXth British Corps and of the whole Suvla landing would be incredible if it were not true. The resignation of Lord Fisher, my dismissal from the Admiralty, and the unpopularity of the Dardanelles enterprise through ignorance, intimidated our successors on the Board of Admiralty from accepting responsibility for the risks that were necessary.

The refusal of the Greek alliance and army when offered in 1914, the failure to obtain that alliance and army when sought in 1915, its mad rejection by Russia, the delicate balance on which the fateful decision of Bulgaria depended, the extraordinary circumstances in Paris which led in September, 1915, to the appointment of General Sarrail and to

the proposal of the French Government to send a large expedition to take possession of the Asiatic shore of the Dardanelles, and the reversal of this policy which offered so many prospects of success, the diversion of all the forces that became available towards the end of 1915 from the vital objective of the Dardanelles and Constantinople to the prodigal, and for nearly three years indecisive, operations from Salonica, the final decision to evacuate Gallipoli, at the time when the position of the Turkish Army was most desperate and the British Navy most confident—all these are separate tragedies.

* * * *

The War of Exhaustion

The end of the Dardanelles campaign closed the second great period of the struggle. There was nothing left on

land now but the war of exhaustion—not only of armies but of nations. No more strategy, very little tactics, only the dull wearing down of the weaker combination by exchanging lives, only the multiplying of machinery on both sides to exchange them quicker. The continuous front now stretched not only from the Alps to the seas, but across the Balkan Peninsula, across Palestine, across Mesopotamia. The Central Empires had successfully defended their southern flank in the Balkans and in Turkey. Their victory quelled simultaneously all likelihood of any attempt against their northern flank upon the Baltic.

All such ideas had received their

quietus. Good, plain, straightforward frontal attacks by valiant flesh and blood against wire and machine guns, "killing Germans" while Germans killed allies twice as often, calling out the men of forty, of fifty, and even fifty-five, and the youths of eighteen, sending the wounded soldiers back three or four times over into the shambles—such were the sole manifestations now reserved for the military art. And when at the end, three years later, the throng of uniformed functionaries who in the seclusion of their offices had complacently presided over this awful process, presented Victory to their exhausted nations, it proved only less ruinous to the victor than to the vanquished.



Photo: Imperial War Museum

THE LAST OF GALLIPOLI

Stores burning on the deserted Gallipoli beach. Upon this photograph taken from the deck of H.M.S. *Cornwallis* at 5 a.m. in the morning, may be rung down the curtain at the close of that which was at once one of the greatest tragedies and one of the finest feats of arms in the history of the British Empire. The campaign was a failure, inasmuch as the objective was not attained. That success could have been achieved and that on more than one occasion there can hardly be room for doubt.

CHAPTER LV

THE HIGH COMMAND

1916—Europe Gripped in the Vice—Galliéni made Minister of War—Galliéni and Joffre—Galliéni, Minister of War—France and the Joffre Legend—Sir John French Recalled—The New Commander-in-Chief—His Credentials

THE New Year's light of 1916 rising upon a frantic and miserable world revealed in its full extent the immense battlefield to which Europe was reduced and on which the noblest nations of Christendom mingled in murderous confusion. It was now certain that the struggle would be prolonged to an annihilating conclusion. The enormous forces on either side were so well matched that the injuries they must suffer and inflict in their struggles were immeasurable. There was no escape. All the combatants in both combinations were gripped in a vice from which no single State could extricate itself.

1916

The northern Provinces of France, invaded and in German occupation, inspired the French people with a commanding impulse to drive the enemy from their soil. The trench lines on which the armies were in deadlock ran—not along the frontiers, where perhaps parley would not have been impossible—but through the heart of France. The appeal to clear the national territory from foreign oppression went home to every cottage and steeled every heart. Germany on the other hand, while her armies stood almost everywhere on conquered territory, could not in the full flush of her strength yield what she had gained with so much blood, nor pay forfeit for her original miscalculations, nor make reparation for the wrong she had done. Any German Dynasty or Government which

had proposed so wise and righteous a course would have been torn to pieces. The French losses and the German conquests of territory thus equally compelled a continuance of the struggle by both nations. A similar incentive operated upon Russia, and in addition the belief that defeat meant revolution hardened all governing resolves. In Britain obligations of honour to her suffering Allies, and particularly to Belgium, forbade the slightest suggestion of slackening or withdrawal. And behind this decisive claim of honour there welled up from the heart of the island race a fierce suppressed passion and resolve for victory at all costs and at all risks, latent since the downfall of Napoleon.

Not less peremptory were the forces dominating the other parties to the struggle. Italy had newly entered the war upon promises which offered her a dazzling reward. These promises were embodied in the Pact of London. They involved conditions to which Austria-Hungary could never submit without final ruin as a great Power. The acceptance by Britain and France of the Russian claim to Constantinople condemned Turkey to a similar fate. Failure meant therefore to both the Austrian and the Turkish Empires not only defeat but dissolution. As for Bulgaria, she could only expect from the victory of the Allies the dire measure she had meted to Serbia.

Europe Gripped in the Vice

Thus in every quarter the stakes were

desperate or even mortal, and each of the vast confederacies was riveted together within itself and each part chained to its respective foe by bonds which only the furnace of war could fuse or blast away. Wealth, science, civilization, patriotism, steam transport and world credit enabled the whole strength of every belligerent to be continually applied to the war. The entire populations fought and laboured, women and men alike, to the utmost of their physical destructiveness. National industry was in every country converted to the production of war material. Tens of millions of soldiers, scores of thousands of cannon hurled death across battle lines, themselves measured in thousands of miles. Havoc on such a scale had never even been dreamed of in the past, and had never proceeded at such a speed in all human history. To carry this process to the final limit was the dearest effort of every nation, and of nearly all that was best and noblest in every nation.

But at the same time that Europe had been fastened into this frightful bondage, the art of war had fallen into an almost similar helplessness. No means of procuring a swift decision presented itself to the strategy of the commanders, or existed on the battlefields of the armies. The chains which held the warring nations to their task were not destined to be severed by military genius, no sufficient preponderance of force was at the disposal of either side, no practical method of a decisive offensive had been discovered, and the ill-directed fires of war, leaving the fetters unbroken, preyed through fatal years upon the flesh of the captive nations.

* * * *

Gallieni made Minister of War

Joffre, if not a heaven-born general, was unquestionably an impressive personality. His position had become firmly established in relation to the grand scale of events. His sense of proportion had from the outset been extended to the limits of the whole battlefield. No other living man had had the advantages of his standpoint or environment. He

was accustomed to think only in terms of armies and groups of armies, all the other frenzied and frightful detail was definitely beneath his consciousness, as it was beneath his sphere of duty. Allied to this supreme outlook, which necessarily only a few men in any country can enjoy, Joffre had the physique and temperament exactly suited to the kind of strains he had to bear and the scale of the decisions he had to take. On these solid foundations the splendid position which he occupied and the tremendous events over which he presided soon built up a vast prestige.

The censorship, for reasons which certainly had weight, discouraged or forbade both in France and England the "writing up" of any generals except the Commander-in-Chief in each country. Thus the population of the allied countries knew only Joffre, and even in France it was to Joffre, and Joffre alone, that the trusting faith of the multitude was month by month and year by year deliberately and mechanically directed.

Nevertheless, as the weary months of trench warfare in 1915 passed away, diversified only by the costly failures of the French offensive in Artois in the spring and in Champagne in the autumn, the currents of hostility gathered continually in volume and intensity. The great popularity of Millerand, who became Minister of War in the early days of the struggle, was slowly sapped through his unswerving loyalty to Joffre, and upon the reconstitution of the French Government under Briand at the end of October, 1915, Millerand disappeared from the scene. He was succeeded as Minister of War by none other than Gallieni.

Gallieni and Joffre

The relations between Joffre and the new Minister were remarkable. Only age had prevented Gallieni from occupying the supreme post at the outbreak of the war. Joffre had actually served under his orders in a minor capacity in Madagascar. On the declaration of war Gallieni had received a letter from the Minister, approved by Joffre, appointing him Joffre's successor should the com-



H.M. THE KING IN FRANCE

Photo Newspaper Illustrations

During the anxious years of 1914-18 H.M. the King as is well known paid several visits to the Western Front where he saw for himself the conditions under which his men were fighting. The King is seen here greeting General Joffre somewhere in France towards the end of 1915. M. Poincaré is on the King's right while in the extreme left of the picture is the Prince of Wales.

mand of the French armies fall vacant. The extraordinary part played by Gallieni in the crisis of the Marne has already been described, and Joffre was certainly not unconscious of the claims that might arise from it. No sooner was the victory won than he withdrew the Sixth Army from the control of Gallieni, leaving him again simply Governor of Paris.

When in December, 1915, the French armies were formed into two groups, Gallieni was anxious to be called to the command of one of them. But Joffre's choice fell elsewhere. Some months later, when the command of the Sixth Army fell vacant, it was offered to Gallieni. But seeing that this command was only a fraction of what he had directed in the Battle of the Marne, Gallieni put the proposal on one side. Finally, on October 1, 1915, Joffre, wishing to place on record once for all his view of Gallieni's contribution to the great victory, had caused to be published in the *Gazette* a citation which gave

widespread offence.¹ Gallieni's comment is said to have been "I could never serve again under the orders of Joffre."

Gallieni, Minister of War

But in October, 1915, the rôles are swiftly reversed, and it is Gallieni who holds the superior position, not only as Minister of War, but as a greater soldier, and, in the eyes of many, a greater hero. In the brief portion of Gallieni's life

¹ 'Est cité à l'Ordre de l'Armée.

"Gallieni, General, Gouverneur Militaire et Commandant des Armées de Paris. Commandant du camp retranché et des armées de Paris, et placé le 2 septembre 1914 sous les ordres du commandant en chef, a fait preuve des plus hautes qualités militaires."

"En contribuant, par les renseignements qu'il avait recueillis, à déterminer la direction de marche prise par l'aile droite allemande,

"En orientant judicieusement, pour participer à la bataille, les forces mobiles à sa disposition,

"En facilitant, par tous les moyens en son pouvoir, l'accomplissement de la mission assignée par le Commandant en chef à ces forces mobiles."

(Ordre du 25 septembre 1915.)

which was lived on the world-stage no feature bears the sign of true greatness more than his treatment of Joffre. Convinced by Briand that Joffre, whatever his shortcomings, was at that time necessary to the national defence, he supported him in every conceivable manner in the field, and defended him in the Chamber on numerous occasions with loyal comradeship. But while thus to the confusion of his

own friends and admirers he paralysed for the time being the hostile movement against Joffre, Gallieni did not fail as a Minister to press for a reform of the many abuses and usurpations of power which had grown up in the Grand Quartier-General at Chantilly. Such was the situation in the French High Command at this period when Kitchener was feverishly seeking to defend Egypt and

Falkenhayn was writing a memorandum about Verdun.

Every great nation in times of crisis has its own way of doing things. The Germans looked to their Kaiser—the All-Highest—whose word was law—but they also looked after him. In some way or other the changing group of dominating personalities at the head of the German Empire worked the Imperial Oracle. We too in England have our own methods, more difficult to explain to foreigners perhaps than any others—and on the whole more inchoate, more crude, more clumsy. Still—they work. And there is also the French method. Studying French war politics, one is struck first by their extreme complexity. The number of persons involved, the intricacy of their relations, the swiftness and yet the smoothness with which their whole arrangement is continually changed, all baffle the stranger during the event and weary him afterwards in the tale. The prevailing impression is that of a swarm of bees—all buzzing together, and yet each bee, or nearly every bee—with a perfectly clear idea of what has got to be done in the practical interests of the hive.

France and the Joffre Legend

At the end of 1915 there were two very definite convictions established in the wide



Photo: Henry Dixon

EDITH LOUISA CAVELL

Edith Cavell was born on August 4, 1865, at Swardeston, Norfolk. She was educated first in England and later at Brussels. Having trained as a nurse, Miss Cavell in course of time returned to Brussels and was practising her profession there at the outbreak of war in 1914. She elected to stay at her post and lived and worked in Belgium until August 5, 1915, when she was arrested by the Germans and charged with harbouring refugees and helping them to escape. On October 11, of the same year, Nurse Cavell was sentenced to death, the sentence being carried out at 2 a.m. on the following morning. This was one more act which justifiable as it may have been from a purely military point of view, outraged the feelings of the civilized world.



Photo Imperial War Museum

GENERAL JOFFRE AT THE BRITISH GHQ

This photograph taken early in 1916 shows General Joffre being received by Sir Douglas Haig at the Chateau de Beaulieu, Montreuil. A short time before this meeting of the two commanders took place Sir Douglas Haig had succeeded Sir John French as Commander in Chief of the British Forces in France.

secret circles of France—Ministers, Lobbies, Army, Press, Society—which were actually concerned in the national defence. The first was that Joffre was not Napoleon, the second that his name and fame constituted an invaluable asset to France. "Unity of Command" was not yet within the bounds of possibility, "unity of front"—all the fronts in one relation—was already a watchword. If this was to be achieved, and if France was to gain or keep control of the strategy of the allied Powers in all the Conferences and joint decisions that were necessary to coherent military action, what martial figure-head could she produce comparable to Joffre?

France—the France that was conducting the war and fighting for life and honour—believed that the name Joffre and the presence of Joffre would impress and dominate the inexperienced but on the whole well-meaning English and carry

weight with the remote colossus of Russia. But they did not like the idea of his leading their remaining armies into further offensives. How then to combine the two desirables? On this basis and with this object a prolonged series of delicate, subtle processes, manoeuvres and devices were elaborated. Joffre was to be made a General of Generals, established in Paris, out of contact with any particular army, his eye ranging over all, presiding over every inter-allied military conference, brought forward by the French Government to pronounce with commanding authority to allied Cabinets or Statesmen, while the actual conduct of the French armies against Germany would be entrusted to someone else. To this end, and as a first step, Joffre was appointed in November, 1915, to the command of all the French armies, whether in France or in the Orient, and Castelnau was made Major-



Photo L. S. A.

A WINTER ISSUE TO THE MEN OF THE BEF

The hardships of a winter campaign have to be experienced to be believed. In the first winter of the Great War the troops in France and Flanders standing firm in their water logged trenches suffered severely from both wet and cold. The goatskin or sheepskin jackets shown above had a marked effect in keeping men fit who might otherwise have been forced to report sick. Later in the Great War this type of jacket was replaced by a strong leather jerkin.



Photo Imperial War Museum

SOLDIER'S OVERALL FOR TRENCH RAIDS

This somewhat unusual garment was worn by patrols and raiding parties when the ground was covered with snow. At such times the dark shades of the ordinary service uniform would have been thrown into strong relief against the white background and casualties would accordingly have mounted.

General at headquarters, an appointment which was intended to carry with it in the highest possible sense the attributes of Chief of the Staff with an implied reversion of the supreme command in France

* * * *

Sir John French Recalled

The end of the year brought also a change in the command of the British Armies in France. We have seen in what circumstances and with what misgivings Sir John French had allowed himself to be involved in the previous September at Loos in the unwisdom of the great French offensive in Champagne. He had conformed with loyalty and ultimately even with ardour to the wishes of Lord Kitchener and to the acquiescence of the British Cabinet. But all this stood him in no stead on the morrow of failure. Those who had not the conviction or resolution to arrest the forlorn attack became easily censorious of its conduct after the inevitable failure. During the course of December proceedings were set on foot by which, at the end of the year, Sir John French was transferred from the command of the British

Army in France to that of the forces at home, and succeeded in that high situation by the Commander of his First Army, Sir Douglas Haig.

These chapters recount the fall from dazzling situations of many eminent men, and it is perhaps worth while at this point to place the reader on his guard against unworthy or uncharitable judgments. The Great War wore out or justly or unjustly cast aside leaders in every sphere as lavishly as it squandered the lives of private soldiers—French, Kitchener, Joffre, Nivelle, Cadorna, Jellicoe, Asquith, Brand, Pamleve, and many others, even in the victorious states. All made their contribution and fell. Whatever the pain at the moment to individuals, there are no circumstances of humiliation in such supersessions. Only those who succeeded, who lived through the convulsion and emerged prosperously at the end, know by what obscure twists and turns of chance they escaped a similar lot. "Those two impostors," Triumph and Disaster, never played their pranks more shamelessly than in the Great War. When men have done their duty and done their best, have shirked no labour and flinched from no

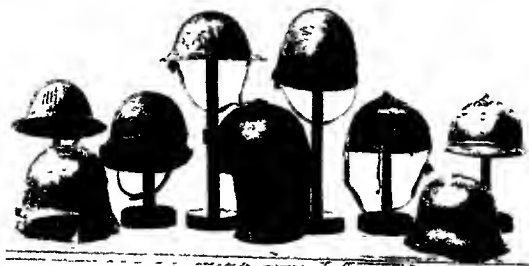


Photo Imperial War Museum

TYPES OF SHRAPNEL-PROOF HELMETS

The shrapnel-proof helmet or to give it the names by which it was better known in the British Army, tin hat or trench bowler was one of the most successful life savers evolved during the Great War. The helmet was not proof against a bullet or against a direct hit by a heavy fragment of shell, but it saved countless lives by resisting shrapnel and by diverting spent bullets and small fragments of shell. The various types shown here are as follows—Back row (from left to right) 1 Portuguese 1917 pattern 2 American 3 British 4 Belgian 1917 pattern 5 French 1916 pattern with vizor 6 French 1916 pattern First row from left to right 1 German with reinforcing piece from Verdun Front 2 sniper's mask 3 Austrian.

decision that it was their task to take, there is no disgrace in eventual personal failure. They are but good comrades who fall in the earlier stages of an assault, which others, profiting by their

efforts and experiences, ultimately carry to victory.

The New Commander-in-Chief

Alike in personal efficiency and pro-

fessional credentials, Sir Douglas Haig was the first officer of the British Army. He had obtained every qualification, gained every experience and served in every appointment requisite for the General Command. He was a cavalry officer of social distinction and independent means, whose whole life had been devoted to military study and practice. He had been Adjutant of his regiment, he had played in its polo team, he had passed through the Staff College, he had been Chief Staff Officer to the Cavalry Division in the South African war, he had earned a Brevet and decorations in the field, he had commanded a column, he had held a command in



From the drawing by Bruce Bairnsfather

"WELL IF YOU KNOWS OF A BETTER OLE GO TO IT!"

The Great War inspired much that was dignified and wonderful in the realms of literature and art. So awe-inspiring an event could hardly have failed in this. There were the poems of Rupert Brooke and Laurence Binyon, the pictures of Orpen and Wyllie, the cartoons of Raemaekers and Partridge. Different from all these were the drawings of Captain Bruce Bairnsfather, who served in France with the 1st Bn. The Royal Warwickshire Regiment. Bairnsfather's humorous drawings of life on the Western Front became famous wherever the English language is spoken and the mental make-up of the British soldier understood. They enabled men and women to laugh at a time when it was not always easy to laugh. In their own way they helped to win the war, and the example given above, the most famous of them all together with those on the opposite page, have for this reason been thought worthy of a place in this work.



From the drawing by Bruce Bairnsfather
COMFORT IN THE TRENCHES

Keep yer ead still or I'll ave yer blinkin
 ear off!



From the drawing by Bruce Bairnsfather
THE THIRST FOR REPRISALS

'And me a rifle someone I'll give these
 —s ell for this'



From the drawing by Bruce Bairnsfather
THINGS THAT MATTER

Colonel Fitz-Shrapnel receives the following
 message from 'GHQ — Please let us
 know as soon as possible the number of tins
 of raspberry jam issued to you last Friday



From the drawing by Bruce Bairnsfather
NO POSSIBLE DOUBT WHATEVER

Sentry Alt! Who goes there?
 He of the bundle ' You shut yer — mouth
 or I'll — come and knock yer — head off!
 Sentry Pass friend!

CHAPTER LVI

FALKENHAYN'S CHOICE

Falkenhayn's Position—Attack the Strong or the Weak—Falkenhayn's Achievement in 1915—The Initiative Returns to Germany—The Politics of Roumania—Roumania at the Outbreak of War—Roumanian Policy in 1915—Her Isolation at Christmas—The Salonica Expedition—The Influence of Lloyd George and Brand—Still Not Too Late—Power of the Unexpected—Falkenhayn's Memorandum—East or West?—His Decision—Examination of His Policy—The Need to Win Roumania—Breaking the Blockade by Land—Roumania or Verdun

THE opening scene of the year 1916 lies in the Cabinet of the German Main Headquarters, and the principal figure is General von Falkenhayn, the virtual Commander-in-Chief of the Central Empires

Falkenhayn's Position

On the evening of September 14, 1914, Falkenhayn, then Minister of War, had been appointed by the Emperor Chief of the German General Staff. From this post General von Moltke who, when the decision of the Marne had become unmistakable, had said to the Emperor "Your Majesty, we have lost the war," had retired, broken in health and heart. The new Director of the German Army also retained for a time his position as Minister of War, and when early in the New Year he ceded this latter post, it was to a nominee of his own. Falkenhayn was therefore armed with the fullest powers, and during a period of almost exactly two years he continued to wield them undisputed.

He had succeeded to a stricken inheritance. The great stake had been played and lost by his predecessor. The rush on Paris, trampling down Belgium, and with it all hope of ending the war by one blow, had failed. It had cost Germany her good name before the world, it had brought into the field against her the sea power, the wealth and the ever-growing military strength of the British Empire. In the east the defeat of the Austrians in the

Battle of Lemberg had balanced the victories of Hindenburg and Ludendorff, and the rulers of Germany, their armies at a standstill, their territories blockaded, their sea-borne commerce arrested, must prepare for a prolonged struggle against a combination of States of at least twice their population and wealth, commanding through sea power the resources of the whole world and possessed at this juncture of the choice where to strike the next blow.

* * * *

The Truths of War are absolute, but the principles governing their application have to be deduced on each occasion from the circumstances, which are always different, and in consequence no rules are any guide to action. Study of the past is invaluable as a means of training and storing the mind, but it is no help without selective discernment of the particular facts and of their emphasis, relation and proportion.

Attack the Strong or the Weak

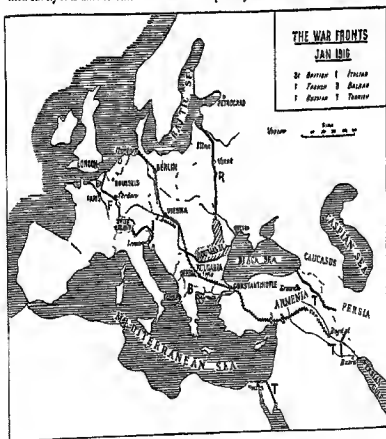
German, like British military policy, oscillated throughout the Great War between two opposed conceptions of strategy. Reduced to the simplest terms the contrasted theories may be expressed as follows. To attack the strong, or to attack the weak. Once all attempts against the Dardanelles were finally excluded from consideration, little was left to Britain but to attack the strong. The Balkans were lost, and the

scale of the armies required to produce decisive results in the Balkan Peninsula or in Turkey had by this time outrun the limits of available sea power. The prizes had disappeared or dwindled, the efforts required to gain them had been multiplied beyond all reason. But to Germany, with her central position and excellent railway system, both alternative policies were constantly open, and her leaders, in their torment of perplexity, were drawn now in one direction and now in the other.

To contend that either of these theories was wholly and invariably right and the other wrong would be to press argument beyond the bounds of common sense. Obviously if you can beat your strongest opponent in the hostile combination you should do so. But if you cannot beat your strongest opponent in the main theatre, nor he beat you, or if it is very unlikely that you can do so and if the cost of failure will be very great, then surely it is time to consider whether

the downfall of your strongest foe cannot be accomplished through the ruin of his weakest ally, or one of her weaker allies, and in this connection a host of political, economic and geographical advantages may arise and play their part in the argument. Every case must be judged upon its merit and in relation to the whole of the circumstances of the occasion. The issue is not one for rigid or absolute decision in general terms, but a strong inclination in theory, based upon profound reflection, is a good guide amid the conflict and confusion of facts.

These pages will leave the reader in no doubt about the opinion of their author. From first to last it is contended that once the main armies were in deadlock in France the true strategy for both sides was to attack the weaker partners in the opposite combination with the utmost speed and ample force. According to this view, Germany was unwise to attack France in August, 1914, and especially unwise to invade Belgium for



THE WAR FRONTS, JANUARY 1916

Sketch map showing the battle line from the North Sea to the Persian Gulf



Photo Central News

ROUMANIAN MOUNTED MACHINE-GUN BATTERY

The Roumanian army like that of the other Balkan States, had prior to 1914 seen service in the Balkan Wars. Many of her soldiers were therefore experienced and hardened veterans. During the period between 1914 and 1916 Roumania while she still remained a neutral State seized the opportunity to raise her army to a high standard of efficiency. The above photograph shows a mounted machine-gun battery engaged in field exercises in 1916.

that purpose. She should instead have struck down Russia and left France to break her teeth against the German fortress and trench lines. Acting thus she would probably have avoided war with the British Empire, at any rate during the opening, and for her most important, phase of the struggle. The first German decision to attack the strongest led to her defeat at the Marne and the Yser, and left her baffled and arrested with the ever-growing might of an implacable British Empire on her hands. Thus 1914 ended.

Falkenhayn's Achievement in 1915

But in 1915 Germany turned to the second alternative, and her decision was attended by great success. Leaving the British and French to shatter their armies against her trench lines in France, Germany marched and led her allies against Russia, with the result that by the autumn enormous territories had been conquered from Russia, all the Russian system of fortresses and strategic railways was in German hands, while the Russian armies were to a large

extent destroyed and the Russian State grievously injured.

The only method by which the Allies could rescue Russia was by forcing the Dardanelles. This was the only counter-stroke that could be effective. If it had succeeded it would have established direct and permanent contact between Russia and her western allies, it would have driven Turkey, or at the least Turkey in Europe, out of the war, and might well have united the whole of the Balkan States, Serbia, Greece, Bulgaria and Roumania, against Austria and Germany. Russia would thus have received direct succour, and in addition would have experienced an enormous relief through the pressure which the combined Balkan States would instantly have applied to Austria-Hungary.

However, the narrow and local views of British Admirals and Generals and of the French Headquarters had obstructed this indispensable manœuvre. Instead of a clear strategic conception being clothed and armed with all that the science of staffs could suggest, it had been resisted, hampered, starved and

left to languish. The time gained by this mismanagement and the situation created by the Russian defeats enabled Germany in September to carry the policy of attacking the weaker a step further. Falkenhayn organized an attack upon Serbia. Bulgaria was gained to the German side, Serbia was conquered, and direct contact was established between the Central Empires and Turkey.

The Initiative Returns to Germany

The failure and final abandonment of the Dardanelles campaign thus sealed the fate not only of the Balkan States but also of Russia. The defeat of the French and British armies in the disastrous battles of Champagne and Loos proved the German front unbreakable in the west. The direct contact between Germany and Turkey established through the accession of Bulgaria gripped Turkey and threw open the road to the east. The year 1915 was therefore one of great success for Germany, and Falkenhayn could claim with justice that by the mistakes of her enemies and by her own adoption of the policy of attacking the weaker she had retrieved in its course the disastrous situation in which she had been left at the end of 1914. Opportunity and initiative had returned to Germany; the next move lay with her, and 1916 dawned in breathless expectation of what it would be.

* * * *

Nowhere was the choice of Germany awaited with more strained attention than in Roumania. The policy of a small State overshadowed by tremendous neighbouring Empires, at grips with one another, from both of whom she coveted important provinces, was necessarily one of calculation. In the years before the war Roumania conceived herself to have been defrauded of Bessarabia by Russia after the Russo-Turkish War of 1878. From Hungary her desires were at once natural and ambitious. Siebenburgen, Transylvania and to a lesser extent the Bukovina were largely inhabited by men of Roumanian race, and in Transylvania particularly

Roumanian sentiment was sternly repressed by the Hungarian Government. To be united to these unredeemed provinces, to join her outlying kinsfolk to the Motherland, to build in one form or another the integral, ethnological unit of a Great Roumania, was throughout the supreme and dominating motive at Bucharest.

These aims had for generations been obvious both to Russia and to Austria-Hungary, who watched without illusion and fully armed every move in Roumanian affairs. On her other borders Roumania clashed with two Balkan States. She competed with Serbian ambitions for the eventual reversion of the Banat of Temesvar. She had profited by the crisis of the Balkan War of 1912 to take the Dobruja from Bulgaria. To her grave preoccupations about Russia and Austria-Hungary, Roumania must henceforth add a persistent fear of Bulgarian revenge.

The Politics of Roumania

These grim external relationships were aggravated by the complications of domestic and dynastic politics. The Roumanian Conservatives, headed by Majoresco, favoured Germany. The Liberals, headed by Brătianu, the new Prime Minister, favoured France. Outside official circles the most prominent politician on the side of the Entente was Take Ionesco, and on the side of Germany Carp. The King was not only pro-German but German, and a faithful son of the House of Hohenzollern to boot. The Heir Apparent was pro-French and his wife pro-English. Both the King and his successor had exceptional consorts. The poetry of "Carmen Sylva" is widely acclaimed, the courage of Queen Marie was to remain undaunted through every trial the tempest had in store. In short, Roumania, if war came, could move in either direction towards alternative prizes glittering across chasms, and in either case she would find a Party and a Royal Family apt and happy to execute her policy. To choose would be an awful hazard. Yet not to choose, to linger in futile neutrality, might cast away the supreme opportunity of Roumanian national history.

A minor complication upon the threshold of action was a Treaty signed in 1883 between Roumania and Austria-Hungary, to which Germany and Italy had subsequently acceded. By this the two parties engaged to follow a friendly policy, to give mutual support and not enter into any alliance or engagement directed against the other party. If Roumania without provocation on her part were attacked Austria-Hungary was bound to bring her in ample time help and assistance. If Austria-Hungary were attacked in the same circumstances in a portion of her State bordering on Roumania, Roumania was reciprocally bound to come to her aid.

This Treaty had been kept strictly secret, and up to the outbreak of war was known in Roumania only to the King and to the Prime Minister. But Russia had deep suspicions that something of the sort existed, and in her railway strategy at least counted Roumania as a potential foe. In 1913 the Treaty, though it still stood, had become extremely precarious, and Count Czernin, the future Austro-Hungarian Foreign Secretary and at that time Austrian Minister to Bucharest was charged specially with the duty of ascertaining from King Carol what reliance could be placed upon the compact. He achieved his object by suggesting to the King that the Alliance should be ratified by the Parliaments at Vienna, Budapest and Bucharest. This test was conclusive. "The alarm evinced by the King," writes Czernin, "at the suggestion—at the very idea that the carefully guarded secret of the existence of an alliance should be divulged, proved to me how totally impossible it would be in the circumstances to infuse fresh life into such dead matter."

Roumania at the Outbreak of War

Swiftly upon this came the bombs of Sarajevo. The Archduke Franz Ferdinand was friendly to Roumania and adverse to the Magyar domination of Hungary. He was believed to favour a scheme of forming a great Roumania at the expense of Hungary, and incorporating the whole unit in a tripartite Empire under a Triple instead of a Dual

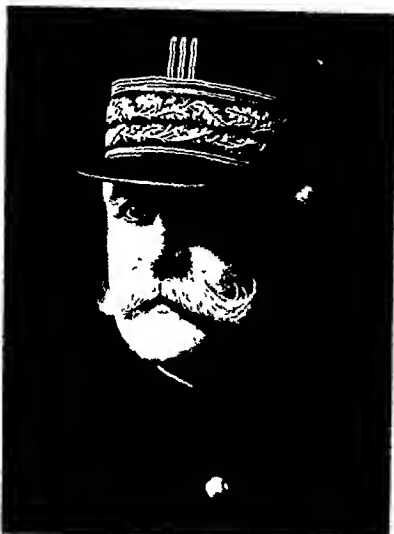
Monarchy. His murder therefore aroused in Roumania not only personal sympathy but national disappointment. At the same time his disappearance removed one of the ties which connected Roumania with the Teutonic Powers. It was left for the Austrian Ultimatum to Serbia to sever the others.

Almost at the same hour when Sir Edward Grey was reading the brutal terms of this document to the British Cabinet in Downing Street, Count Czernin was repeating them to King Carol in Bucharest. "Never shall I forget," writes Czernin, "the impression it made on the old King when he heard it. He, wise old politician that he was, recognized at once the immeasurable possibilities of such a step, and before I finished reading the document he interrupted me, exclaiming, 'It will be a world war.' It was long before he could collect himself."

Czernin continues: "The Ultimatum and the danger of war completely altered the Roumanian attitude, and it was suddenly recognized that Roumania could achieve her object by other means, not by peace but by war—not with, but against the [Austro-Hungarian] Monarchy. I would never have believed it possible that such a rapid and total change could have occurred practically within a few hours. Genuine and unsimulated indignation at the tone of the Ultimatum was the order of the day, and the universal conclusion arrived at was 'Austria has gone mad.' Like a rock standing in the angry sea of hatred, poor old King Carol was alone with his German sympathies."

Upon the complicated politics of aspiring Roumania the Great War had thus supervened. Russia and Austria-Hungary sprang at each other in mortal conflict, while high above the European scene rose the flaming sword of Germany. Each side bid for Roumania's favours and offered bribes for Roumania's intervention. But the inducements of the Great Powers took the form, not of ceding portions of their own territory to Roumanian sovereignty, but rather of promising to cede portions of their rivals' territory to Roumania if

¹ *In the World War*. Count Ottokar Czernin.



GENERAL SARRAIL

Photo Henri Marval

Maurice Paul Emmanuel Sarraïl was born at Carcassonne April 6 1856. In the course of a lengthy term of service in the French Army which included operations in Tunis and Algeria with the Foreign Legion General Sarraïl had prior to 1914, held many important military appointments. During the earlier stages of the Great War he commanded the Third French Army and later in 1915 took command of the French Army of the Orient at Salonica. In January 1916 he assumed command of all the Allied forces on that front.

with her assistance they won the war. The question which Roumania had to decide was, Who would win the War? It was very difficult to tell, yet on judging rightly depended Ruin or Empire. Long did Roumania hesitate before she gave her answer.

Roumanian Policy in 1915

There was no doubt where at the outset her sympathies lay. Roumania saw like all neutral states like all detached observers, how flagrantly the Central Powers had put themselves in the wrong and how grossly they had

blundered. On the balance far more was to be gained by Roumania from the downfall of Austria-Hungary than from that of Russia. The pro-French Brătianu ministry was in power. Take Ionesco, like Venizelos in Greece, never swerved from the conviction that England would always come out victorious. Sympathies, merits, interest, mood, all pointed towards Britain, France and Russia. On the other side was King Carol with the Treaty on his conscience—and the fear of national destruction at his heart.

Prudence enjoined delay, and in this atmosphere any proposal of honouring the alliance and joining Austria was out of the question. The Roumanian Government followed the Italian example of declaring that as there had not been an unprovoked attack upon Austria the *casus foederis* had not arisen.

Roumania declared neutrality, and King Carol had to be content with this. The policy of Roumania henceforward is sourly described by Czernin in the following terms, which cannot be considered just unless her difficulties are also comprehended. "The Roumanian Government consciously and deliberately placed itself between the two groups of Powers and allowed itself to be driven and pushed by each, got the largest amount of advantages from each, and watched for the moment when it could be seen which was the stronger, in order then to fall upon the weaker."

Her Isolation at Christmas

While the old King lived his influence was sufficient, in spite of the Battle of Lemberg and the Russian advance into Galicia, to prevent Roumania from declaring war upon Austria-Hungary. But on October 10, 1914, King Carol died. By this time it was evident that the war would be long, and its result was more than ever to Roumanian eyes incalculable.

In the spring of 1915 the Germans began to shatter the Russian front, and the immense disasters and recoil of the Russian armies dominated the Roumanian mood and paralysed the disconnected British, French and Russian diplomacy. On the other hand, the attack upon the Dardanelles, the prospect of the fall of Constantinople and of the arrival of a British Fleet in the Black Sea was a counterpoise. All through 1915, while the Russian retreat was continual, the expectation of a British and French victory over Turkey kept Roumania true to her convictions and neutral in the war. She accepted money

from both sides, she sold corn and oil to Germany, but she obstructed the passage of German munitions to the Dardanelles and closed no gate decisively upon the Allies. With the failure of the Dardanelles Expedition, with the accession of Bulgaria to the Teutonic cause, with the invasion and ruin of Serbia and the final evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula, all the military factors became adverse, and Roumania at the beginning of 1916 stood isolated and encompassed by the Central Empires.

* * * *

The Salonica Expedition

There was however one factor of which Roumania took notice. An allied army based on Salonica faced the Bulgarians along their southern frontier. We have already seen the curious beginnings of this enterprise, and, so far as they are worth recording, the still more curious causes which led its being entrusted to the command of General Sarrail.

Sarrail had arrived at Salonica in



SALONICA A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Photo E 14

Salonica formerly a Turkish seaport came into the possession of Greece in 1912. The harbour is a very fine one and the city itself, viewed from the sea, is imposing. It rises from the shore in a series of terraces to the citadel at the top. The old city walls are seen to the right of the photograph.



GREEK OFFICERS ON THE PLAZA AT SALONICA

The Greek Army in 1914 was an efficient force of well-trained and experienced soldiers. It fought with distinction in the Balkan Wars its successes when allied with Bulgaria and Serbia against Turkey resulting in the expansion of Greek territory to the extent of some 16 000 square miles. Later in 1913 Greece gained further territory during her quarrel with Bulgaria. This army might have been at the disposal of the Allies for the attack upon the Dardanelles. The offer was made but for reasons outlined in the text on page 458 it was declined, and a golden opportunity of making prompt settlement with Turkey was lost.

September, 1915, to find one British and two French divisions in or near the town. The Serbians were retreating in all the cruel severity of the winter before the German-Austro-Bulgarian invasion. Some small French detachments were sent northward up the Vardar Valley, but of course it was already too late for Sarrail or the Allied Powers to give any effective help. Sarrail had neither the force nor the communications to enable him to act effectively.

As the British General Staff had explained carefully to their Government in October, no sufficient force could be spared, or if spared, landed in Salonica in time, or if landed at Salonica, transported and maintained in Serbia. The roads and railways, the wagons and rolling stock which existed could not carry to the north any army large enough seriously to intervene in the tragedy of the Serbian overthrow. At the same time the attitude of King Constantine had become so openly pro-

German that there was an obvious danger of Salonica being converted into a hostile town behind the French advanced detachments which were based upon it. In these circumstances, Sarrail had recalled his troops hastily to the town of Salonica, determined to keep a hold at any rate on his base and the remnant of the Serbian army managed in the end to make its escape to the shores of the Adriatic, whence French and Italian warships embarked the indomitable survivors and brought them round to Salonica by sea. Here then in November, 1915, had ended the first futile phase of the Salonica expedition.

The Influence of Lloyd George and Briand

But this as it had turned out was only to be the beginning of the story. Although Serbia was conquered, the remnants of her army rescued, Bulgaria committed to the side of the Central Powers, and although the effectual co-



Photo, Imperial War Museum

RATION DUMP ON THE SALONICA FRONT

This pile of wooden boxes containing food for a part of the comparatively small force operating on the Salonica Front is insignificant when compared with the immense supplies of similar stores which were amassed at various points behind the Western Front and elsewhere. When it is considered that in addition to ration dumps there were also ammunition dumps and stores of military equipment of all kinds, all of which were rapidly depleted and as rapidly replenished, it will be more clearly comprehended why the cost of a modern war mounts to almost fantastic figures.

operation of Greece had become hopeless, the Salonica policy was to continue. At the beginning of 1915 both Lloyd George and Briand had had the same idea of sending a large army to Salonica to influence the Balkans. They had not then had the power to execute their plan while it had great prizes to offer, but when almost all the possible advantages had disappeared these two brilliant men, akin in many ways in temperament, found themselves advancing to controlling positions. They both adhered faithfully to their first conception, and neither seemed to realize how vastly its prospects had been curtailed. Such was their influence upon events that a numerous allied army was, at enormous cost, in defiance of military opinion, and after most of the original political objectives had disappeared, carried or being carried to Salonica.

At the outset the oppositions to developing the Salonica expedition on a far larger scale seemed overwhelming, the

majority of the British Government was against the plan, the General Staff were violently adverse, Lord Kitchener threatened several times to resign if it was pressed. Against this combination was Lloyd George. Similar conditions existed on the other side of the Channel, Joffre and the French Grand Quartier General were adverse to the proposed diversion of forces from the main theatre. Clemenceau was violently hostile, but Briand, adroit, persuasive, and now Prime Minister, had many resources. Joffre's position had been weakened by his defeat in Champagne, and an accommodation was effected between him and the French Cabinet, of which the salient features were that Joffre should have the Salonica army as well as the armies in France under his general command, and that in return Joffre should wholeheartedly support the Salonica project in the councils of the Allies and also with the resources at his disposal. France thus united then threw her whole weight

upon the British Cabinet and finally, aided by Lloyd George, induced their compliance

The controversies which raged on both sides of the Channel upon the Salonica expedition were silenced by the remarkable fact that it was upon this much abused front that the final collapse of the Central Empires first began. The falling away of Bulgaria, the weakest ally, produced reactions in Germany as demoralizing as the heaviest blows they had sustained upon the Western Front. The Salonica policy, for all its burden upon our shipping and resources, its diversion of troops, its false beacon to Roumania, and its futile operations, was nevertheless largely vindicated by the extremely practical test of results. The consternation of Bulgaria at the defeats of the German armies in France was however at least as potent a factor in her collapse as the actual military pressures to which her own troops were subjected. The reactions were reciprocal, the German defeats undermined Bulgarian resistance, and the Bulgarian surrender pulled out the linchpin of the German combination.

* * * *

Still Not Too Late

True strategy in 1915 pointed for the Allies to the south-eastern theatre, to the Balkan States, to Constantinople, to the weaker members of the hostile confederacy, and though everything was done at the wrong time, in the wrong way, and at the wrong place, nevertheless the general direction of the pressure was right, and in the long run produced results. There was however one way in which the true strategic direction could have been armed with tactical force.

It must have been a hard thing for William the Conqueror at the Battle of Hastings to call his proud Normans off from the attack, and by feigning a flight down the Hill of Senlac to induce Harold and his army to quit the stockades they had so stubbornly defended. William was not however found unequal to that test, and has in consequence been called the "Conqueror" ever since.

Following this suggestion, the reader

will no doubt perceive that the plan of British and Allied war which according to this account would best have served our interests in the year 1916 would have been a surprise attack upon the Dardanelles. Such an operation, if successful, would have been the only parry to a possible German eastward thrust, and the only means of holding Russia and preventing Roumania from being absorbed in the Teutonic combination.

In face of the actual German plans for a great offensive at Verdun, for the withdrawal of all German troops from the Austrian Front, and an Austrian offensive in the Trentino, the forcing of the Dardanelles by Allied Fleets and armies might well have been decisive. If this could have been accomplished by the month of June, Roumania might have been persuaded to march against the Central Powers simultaneously with the Russian offensive under Brusilov, and in this event there can be no doubt that the whole Austrian Front towards the east would have been completely swept away. Moreover, the concentration of such large numbers of allied troops already in existence in the eastern Mediterranean, at Salonica, in Egypt and the Islands, and the immense quantities of shipping and small craft of all kinds which were already on the spot, would have rendered a general descent upon the Gallipoli Peninsula, on the Asiatic shore or at Dedeagatch-Bulair, a thoroughly feasible scheme.

Power of the Unexpected

A single mental conception would have transformed all the twenty allied divisions, sprawled in defensive or diverse functions, into a vast army crouching, under the cover of perfectly satisfactory explanations, for one swift co-vergent spring. Assuredly the enemy—Turks and Allies—were absolutely convinced that, dreading the fire that had burned us, we would never molest the Dardanelles again. Within two months of our evacuation they had withdrawn all their troops from the Gallipoli Peninsula, except three divisions, and had distributed them in Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia, Anatolia and Thrace. The Turkish Army that had so stoutly



Photo Imperial War Museum

CAMOUFLAGING A GUN POSITION

The art of camouflaging or disguising gun positions was reduced as the war progressed to a fine art. The spotting activities of hostile aircraft forced the gunners of every army to do everything possible to deceive the enemy as to the exact whereabouts of their guns. This applied, in particular to the heavier guns. The form of camouflage in use here is netting or other rough material to which are attached bunches of grass. From the air unless a tell tale gun-flash was observed the position would appear as a rough scrub covered knoll.

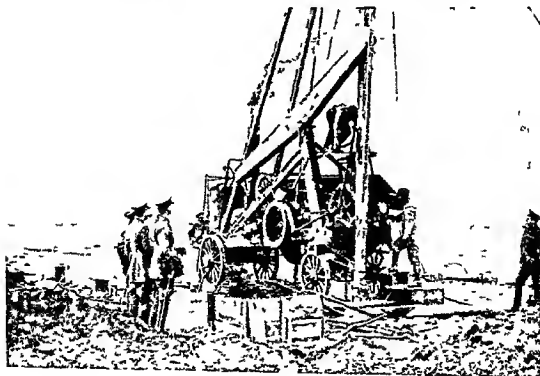


Photo Imperial War Museum

ROYAL ENGINEERS BORING FOR WATER

This photograph taken on the Salonica Front shows men of that remarkable branch of the Service the Royal Engineers carrying out one of the many jobs that fall to their lot in war. On the Eastern Fronts such as Salonica, Gallipoli, Sinai, Palestine and Mesopotamia the water problem was always acute. It speaks volumes for the ingenuity and devotion to duty of the R.E. that whereas though men and horses had at times to have their water supply strictly rationed it was but rarely that they had none at all.

defended the Peninsula was scattered to every point of the compass, and separated from that fateful spot by long, uncertain, and inefficient railway and road communications.

The British Army that might attack the deserted Peninsula lay within thirty-six hours' steaming of whatever landing places might be selected. The Navy was thoroughly equipped for the task. Not only did we know—to our cost maybe, but also to our experience—every inch of the ground and every yard of the coast, but a situation as favourable as was open in March or April, 1915, had returned. The enemy was once again off his guard, and the choice of time and place had, in this theatre at least, returned to our hands. The very barriers of inhibition that existed in the minds of the British Cabinet, and of which the enemy was clearly conscious, were the prime reason for the attempt.

The more morally impossible a military operation, the better chance it will have of success if it is physically practicable. Surprise—that sovereign talisman of War—springs from the doing of the exact thing the enemy is certain will never be tried. "Whatever happens, they will never do that again. Put yourself in their place, would you?" "No, it is inconceivable." Do it then—if this is the enemy's thought—and do it for that very reason. However, no such audacious scheme crossed the minds of our rulers. They trusted they might never hear the name of Gallipoli again, and yielded themselves with placid hopefulness to the immense frontal attacks which were being prepared in France. It was not until the summer of 1918 that Admiral Keyes—strong in the achievement of Zeebrugge—and Admiral Wemyss installed as First Sea Lord, were able to obtain the authority for a renewed naval forcing of the Dardanelles in the possible campaign of 1919. That was at last too late.

* * * *

Falkenhayn's Memorandum—
East or West?

Long and anxious were the reflections of the German High Command. They have been elaborately explained by the

person chiefly responsible. During Christmas, 1915, Falkenhayn set himself to write a Memorandum for the eye of the Emperor. He has published it in his Memoirs. The document is not an impressive one and it bears evidence of being dressed to the taste of Falkenhayn's august master, but its argument and its conclusion were certainly clear.

Falkenhayn deprecated but did not seek to veto the Austrian proposal for an attack on Italy. He disapproved of attacks on England in the east. "Victories at Salonica, the Suez Canal or in Mesopotamia can only help us in so far as they intensify the doubts about England's invulnerability which have already been aroused amongst the Mediterranean peoples and in the Mohammedan world. We can in no case expect to do anything of decisive effect in the course of the war, as the advocates of an Alexander march to India or Egypt or an overwhelming blow at Salonica are always hoping."

He rejected plans for continuing the offensive against Russia. "According to all reports the domestic difficulties of the 'Giant Empire' are multiplying rapidly. Even if we cannot perhaps expect a revolution in the grand style, we are entitled to believe that Russia's internal troubles will compel her to give in within a relatively short period. Unless we are again prepared to put a strain on the troops which is altogether out of proportion—and this is prohibited by the state of our reserves—an offensive with a view to a decision in the East is out of the question for us until April, owing to the weather and the state of the ground. *The rich territory of the Ukraine is the only objective that can be considered*¹. The communications towards that region are in no way sufficient. It is to be presumed that we should either secure the adhesion of Roumania or make up our minds to fight her both are impracticable for the moment. A thrust at Petersburg, with its million inhabitants, whom we should have to feed from our own short stocks if the operations were successful, does not promise a decision. An advance on

¹ My italics.

Moscow takes us nowhere. We have not the forces available for any of these undertakings. For all these reasons Russia as an object of our offensive must be considered as excluded."

Falkenhayn then proceeds to examine the western theatre. "In Flanders, as far as the Lorette Ridge, the state of the ground prevents any far-reaching operation until the middle of the spring. South of that point the local Commanders consider that about thirty divisions would be required. The offensive in the northern sector would need the same number. Yet it is impossible for us to concentrate those forces on one point of our front. Moreover, the lessons to be deduced from the failure of our enemies' mass attacks are decisive against any imitation of their battle methods."

"An attempt at a mass break-through, even with an extreme accumulation of men and material, cannot be regarded as holding out prospects of success against a well-armed enemy whose morale is sound and who is not seriously inferior in number. The defender has usually succeeded in closing the gap. This is easy enough for him if he decides to withdraw voluntarily, and it is hardly possible to stop him doing so. The salients thus made, enormously exposed to the effect of flank fire, threaten to become a mere slaughter-house. The technical difficulties of directing and supplying the masses bottled up in them are so great as to seem practically insurmountable."

"We must equally discountenance any attempt to attack a British sector with comparatively inadequate means. We could only approve that course if we could give such an attack an objective within reasonable reach. There is no such objective, our goal would have to be nothing less than to drive the English completely from the Continent and force the French behind the Somme. If that object at least were not attained the attack would have been purposeless."

His Decision

Having disposed of all these alternatives the General approaches the con-

clusion to which his reflections had led him. "There remains only France."

The strain in France has almost reached breaking-point.

The uncertain method of a mass break-through, in any case beyond our means, is unnecessary. Within our reach, behind the French sector of the Western Front, there are objectives for the retention of which the French General Staff would be compelled to throw in every man they have. If they do so, the forces of France will bleed to death—as there can be no question of a voluntary withdrawal—whether we reach our goal or not. If they do not do so, and we reach our objective, the moral effect on France will be enormous. For an operation limited to a narrow front, Germany will not be compelled to spend herself so completely, for all other fronts are practically drained. She can face with confidence the relief attacks to be expected on these fronts, and indeed hope to have sufficient troops in hand to reply to them with counter-attacks, for she is perfectly free to accelerate or draw out her offensive, to intensify or break it off from time to time as suits her purpose.

"The objectives of which I am speaking now are Belfort and Verdun. The considerations urged above apply to both, yet the preference must be given to Verdun. The French lines at that point are barely 12 miles distant from the German railway communication. Verdun is therefore the most powerful *point d'appui* for an attempt [by the French] with a relatively small expenditure of effort to make the whole German front in France and Belgium untenable. At Christmas," says Falkenhayn, "it was decided to give effect to the views which had crystallized out of this process of reasoning."

Examination of His Policy

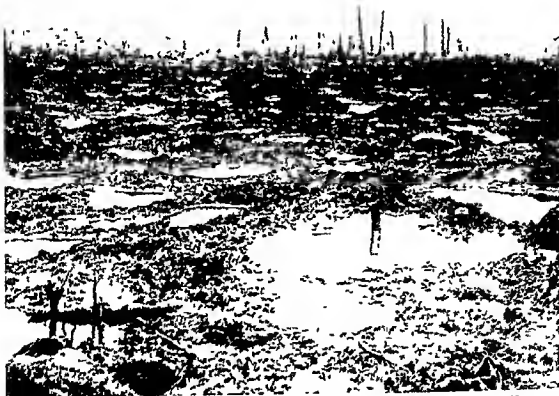
The execution of Falkenhayn's new policy required an almost complete relaxation of the pressure upon Russia. Hindenburg and Ludendorff were informed that no great enterprises against Russia could be set on foot in 1916, and that they could expect no reinforcements. All the German troops

were withdrawn in the south from the Galician Front and this theatre, so pregnant at once with menace and advantage, was confided entirely to Austrian hands. At the same time the Austrians were not dissuaded from preparing and developing an offensive against Italy in the Trentino for which purpose they also withdrew a number of their best troops from their Eastern Front. And thus both north and south the Central Powers turned away from the eastern frontiers and their momentous problems, and leaving Russia to recover behind them and Roumania to brood over the scene with anxious eyes, plunged into desperate adventures in the west.

This was indeed a momentous decision. It involved the complete reversal of the policy by which General von Falkenhayn had in 1915 restored the German situation. Instead of pursuing his advantages against the weaker

antagonists, he selected for the great German effort of 1916 the strongest enemy at that enemy's strongest point. That the decision was disastrous has been proved by the event. But it may be contended also that it was wrong. It was based first of all upon an erroneous appreciation of the offensive and defensive conditions on the great battle-fronts in France and upon the mistaken belief that the general war could be brought to an end in 1916 by some strong effort there by one side or the other. Secondly, it took altogether too narrow and too purely military a view of the general position of Germany and her allies.

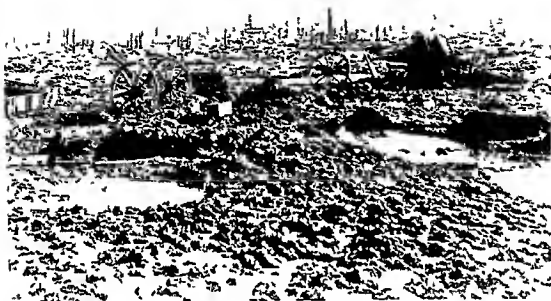
The vital need for Germany was to break the blockade. Unless she could secure to herself resources far greater than could be found within the frontiers of the quadruple Alliance the long war, to which the world was now condemned, must end inevitably in her exhaustion.



DEVASTATION NEAR THE AISNE

Photo Imperial War Museum

The appalling conditions under which operations were carried on during the winter months of the Great War are aptly conveyed by the pictures on this page and on that opposite. Both photographs show country which before the war was forest land. In both cases the trees have been blown to pieces and the ground is nothing but a shell-pitted swamp.

*Photo Photofress*

AND IN THE YPRES SECTOR

Here again in Sanctuary Wood are the shell-holes water logged and treacherous. During the fighting in Belgium and Northern France many a man lost his life by drowning in the often unsuspected depths of holes blown out by the explosion of heavy howitzer shells. For the wounded man making his way wearily and painfully to the rear these pools of evil stagnant water were often veritable death traps.

and defeat. She had no chance of breaking the blockade at sea. Its efficiency might be impaired by the devices of neutrals, but the vast process of starvation not only in food but in materials indispensable to modern armies was remorselessly and unceasingly at work. The British Fleet towered up in massive strength, and no one seriously doubted what the result of a fought-out battle on blue water would be. Sea Power and Land Power were arrayed against each other, and if Germany could not conquer Britain on the seas, where could she turn?

Only in one direction lay salvation. If she could not break the blockade by sea, she must break it by land. If the oceans were closed, Asia was open. If the west was barred with triple steel, the east lay bare. Only in

the east and south-east and in Asia could Germany find the feeding grounds and breathing room—nay, the man power—without which her military strength however impressive was but a wasting security. Only in spreading their frontiers over new enormous regions could the Central Empires make themselves a self-contained and self-sufficing organism, and only by becoming such an organism could they deprive their enemies of the supreme and deadly weapon—Time.

The Need to Win Roumania

The true and indeed the only attainable political objectives open to Germany in 1916 were the final overthrow of Russia and the winning of Roumania to the side of the Central Empires. These were harmonious aims. Success in the



IN NO MAN'S LAND

This impressive and poignant scene was photographed by the Canadian War Photographic Staff
was taken from the Canadian front-line trenches and shows the debatable land between the
is quiet

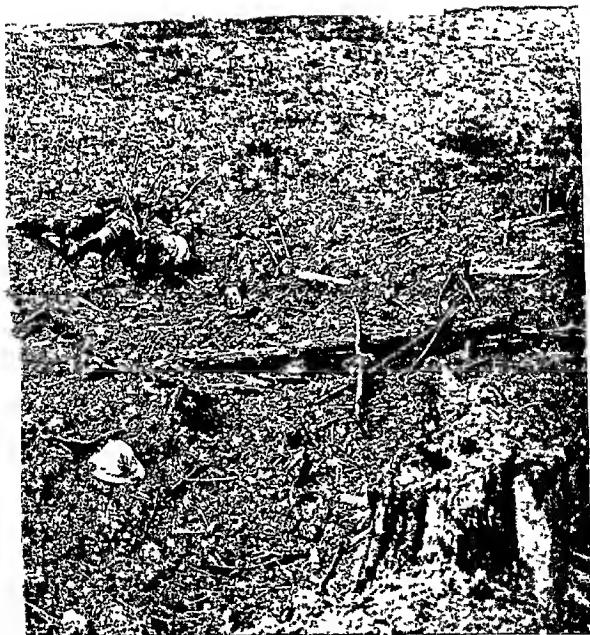


Photo Copyright

ADIAN SECTOR

was shown at an exhibition of Canadian war photographs in London in 1916. The picture
 ing lines. Shells are bursting on and over the German support lines, but otherwise all
 desolate.

first would go far to achieve the second Roumania was essential to Germany. "As I now saw quite clearly," writes Ludendorff of the situation in October, 1916, "we should not have been able to exist, much less carry on the war without Roumania's corn and oil." But if the battered corpse of an invaded and conquered Roumania was thus indispensable at the end of the year, how much more precious would have been Roumania with her resources and her armies as an ally at the beginning.

During 1915 a German convention with Roumania had secured to the Teutonic Powers the vital corn and oil supplies. But Germany in January, 1916, might reasonably look for a far more favourable development. Bulgaria had joined the Central Powers. The Dardanelles were safely shut. Russia was reeling. Roumania was therefore already almost surrounded, and any further collapse of Russia would isolate her completely. If she coveted Transylvania from Hungary, did she not also claim Bessarabia from Russia? A sagacious German policy at this juncture could have offered to Roumania in combination every inducement to join her neighbours, from high rewards to extreme duress.

Breaking the Blockade by Land

Following upon this it would appear that the true strategic objectives of Germany in 1916 were the Black Sea and the Caspian. These lay within her grasp and required no effort beyond her strength. A continued advance against the south lands of Russia into the Ukraine and towards Odessa would have secured at comparatively little cost sufficient food for the Teutonic peoples. An upward thrust of Turkish armies sustained by German troops and organized by German generals would have conquered the Caucasus.

Fleets and flotillas improvised by German science could easily dominate both the inland seas. The command of these waters would threaten simultaneously every point along their 5,000 miles of coast line, absorbing in negative defence ten Russians for every German employed, and multiplying in an almost unlimited degree the opportunities for further

advance. Roumania completely encircled, cut from French and British aid by Bulgaria and Turkey, cut from the Russian armies by an Austro-German march from Lemberg to Odessa, could have had no choice but to join the Central Empires. The skilful employment of fifteen or twenty German divisions animating Austrian and Turkish armies would surely and easily have extended the territories which nourished Germany so as to include by the end of the summer of 1916 the whole of South-Eastern Europe, the Black Sea, the Caucasus and the Caspian. The Austro-German Front against Russia might have stretched from Riga to Astrakhan, with little more expenditure of force than was required to hold the existing eastern line.

At every moment and at every stage in these vast combinations the pressure upon Russia and upon her failing armies would have increased and at every stage her troops and those of her allies would have been dissipated in vain attempts to wall in the ever-spreading flood in the east, or would have been mown down in the frantic assaults upon the German trenches in France.

And this was itself only a stage in the process of land expansion and strategic menace open to the German military power. From the Caspian once navally commanded, Persia was a cheap and easy prey. There was no need to march large armies like Alexander to the east. Literally a few thousand Germans could have dominated Northern Persia, and eastward still beyond Persia lay Afghanistan and the threat to India. The consequences of such a German policy must have paralysed all British war effort from her Indian Empire. In Egypt, in Mesopotamia, and in India whole armies of British and Indian troops would have been forced to stand idle in apprehension of impending invasion or revolt, while the glory of the German eagles and the sense of approaching change swept far and wide through the peoples of Asia.

Roumania or Verdun

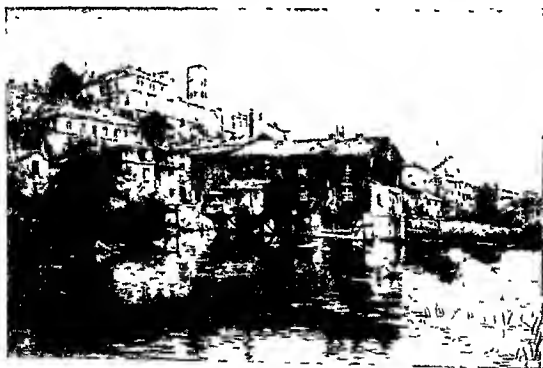
But from all the prospects so opened out to her in the east Germany was

lured away. The final destruction of Russia, the overawing and conversion of Roumania, the conquest of granary after granary and oilfield after oilfield, the indefinite menace to the British Empire in Asia, with consequent diversion and dissipation of British forces were all renounced by Falkenhayn in a few meagre sentences. Germany was made to concentrate her whole available offensive effort upon the cluster of wooded hills and permanent defences which constituted the strong fortress of Verdun. One-half the effort, one-quarter the sacrifice, lavished vainly in the attack on Verdun would have overcome the difficulty of the detective communications in "the rich lands of the Ukraine." The Russian armies in the south would have been routed long before they had gained their surprising victories under

Brusilov and Roumania, her 500,000 men and her precious supplies of corn and oil, would have been brought into the war early, not late, and as an ally and not as a foe.

But the school of formula had vanquished the school of fact, the professional bent of mind had overridden the practical, submission to theory had replaced the quest for reality. Attack the strongest at his strongest point, not the weakest at his weakest point, was once again proclaimed the guiding maxim of German military policy.

From the moment when he received the news of the total evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula, the opportunity of General von Falkenhayn, Chief of the German General Staff, was to pronounce the word *ROUMANIA*. He pronounced instead the word *VERDUN*.



*From a picture by J. Renard. Photograph by J. D. Dupont.
Picture copyrighted in the U. S. A. and Canada.*

VERDUN IN THE DAYS OF PEACE

A town and first class fortress on the Meuse Verdun was destined to witness one of the most ruthless offensives waged on any front during the Great War. Falkenhayn rightly believing that the French would attach to the defence of Verdun an importance greater than its position in the line warranted determined to bring against it a hitherto unheard of weight of artillery with which to massacre the French reinforcements as fast as they could be brought up. The text describes how the Germans fared in this enterprise one of the two great battles in 1916 from the effects of which their army was never fully to recover.

CHAPTER LVII

VERDUN

The Dismantled Forts—Fact and Sentiment—The Anvil—Falkenhayn's Tactical Conception—The Attitude and Responsibility of the Crown Prince—Colonel Driant, Deputy for Nancy—Galléni and Joffre—Castelnau's Mission—The Battle Begins—The Composure of General Joffre—Activities of Castelnau and Pétain—The Struggle Prolonged—Falkenhayn Entangled—Cost of a Rigid Defence—Galléni's Last Act—'Unity of Front'—Genesis of the Somme—Reaction of Verdun upon the Somme Plan—The Revival of Russia—The Fatal Defect—Brusilov's Offensive—The Fruits of Surprise—Consequences—The Price of Verdun

THE drama of Verdun may perhaps be opened by the visit to the fortress in July, 1915, of a delegation from one of the Army Commissions of the Chamber. The deputies had been disquieted by the rumours they had heard of the insecurity of the region before which lay the army of the German Crown Prince. The delegation were received by General Dubail, commanding the group of armies of the east, and by the Governor of Verdun, General Coutanceau.

The Dismantled Forts

General Dubail explained that after the experiences of Liège and Namur permanent forts were no longer useful. They could be destroyed with certainty by heavy howitzers and were mere shell traps for their garrisons. The only effective defence of Verdun lay in field troops holding an extended line around the fortress. Following these ideas, for which there was much to say, the forts had been dismantled and their coveted guns, garrisons and stores dispersed among the armies. The Governor, General Coutanceau, had the temerity to express a different opinion. He considered that the forts still had a high value and should play an important part in conjunction with the field defences. General Dubail was so irritated at this intervention of his subordinate and rebuked him in terms of such severity, that the Commission on their return to Paris thought it necessary to appeal to the Minister of War to

shield the outspoken Governor from punishment and disgrace. In fact however, after an interval of a few weeks General Coutanceau was removed from the Governorship of Verdun, and his place was taken by General Herr. At the beginning of February, 1916, on the very eve of the attack, the army of which the Verdun troops formed a part was transferred from the command of General Dubail to the centre group under General de Langle de Cary. Thus the responsibility for the neglect to develop to the full the defences of this area was divided and difficult to trace.

* * * *

Fact and Sentiment

In a military sense, Verdun had no exceptional importance either to the French or to the Germans. Its forts were disarmed, it contained no substantial magazines, it guarded no significant "strategic" point. It was two hundred and twenty kilometres from Paris, and its capture would not have made any material difference to the safety either of the capital or of the general line. Falkenhayn and Ludendorff both speak of it as a dangerous sally-port against their main railway communications, scarcely twelve miles away. But seeing that only two inferior lines of railway served Verdun, while the German occupied area in its front was fed by no less than fifteen, it should have been easy for the Germans to provide against such a sally. At its highest, the capture of Verdun would

have been a military convenience to the Germans and in a lesser degree an inconvenience to the French

But then there was the sentiment which attached to Verdun "It was," says a French historian,¹ "the great fortress proudly confronting its rival Metz, whose name had for centuries not ceased to haunt Germanic imaginations, it was the great advanced citadel of France, the principal bastion of her eastern frontier, whose fall resounding throughout Europe and the whole world would efface for ever the victories of the Marne and Yser"

The Anvil

This then was the foundation upon which Falkenhayn's conception of the German attack upon Verdun stood. It was not to be an attempt at a "breakthrough." The assailants were not to be drawn into pockets from which they would be fired at from all sides. They were to fire at the French and assault them continually in positions which French pride would make it impossible to yield. The nineteen German divisions and the massed artillery assigned to the task were to wear out and "bleed white" the French army. Verdun was to become an anvil upon which French military manhood was to be hammered to death by German cannon. The French were to be fastened to fixed positions by sentiment, and battered to pieces there by artillery. Of course this ingenious plan would be frustrated

¹ Corda *La Guerre Mondiale*, p. 187



Photo Sport & General

GENERAL DE LANGLE DE CARY

Commander of the Fourth French Army at the outbreak of the Great War. In February, 1916, after the controversy concerning the utility of the forts at Verdun, responsibility for the defence of this strong point was transferred from General Dubail, the apostle of open field works, to General de Langle de Cary, then commanding the centre group of armies. He is seen here on the left of the photograph with a member of his staff.

if the French did not lend themselves to it, and if they did not consider themselves bound to make disproportionate sacrifices to retain the particular hills on which stood the empty forts of Verdun.

It is not intended to press this argument too far. Verdun was a trophy. The German challenge had to be met by the whole resources of the French army, but ground should have been sacrificed in the conflict as readily as men, with the sole object of exacting the highest price from the enemy at every stage. A greater manœuvring latitude accorded to the defence would have



COUNTRY TO THE NORTH WEST OF VERDUN

Photo Copyright

A photograph taken from the French lines in April 1916 during the progress of the battle for Verdun

rendered the whole episode far less costly to the French army, and would have robbed the plan of General von Falkenhayn of such reasons as it could muster. But the German commander, wrong in so much else, had rightly gauged the psychology of the French nation.

Writing in August, 1916, I tried to penetrate and analyse the probable motives which animated the Germans in their attack on Verdun.¹

"Suppose your gap is blasted—what then? Are you going to march to Paris through it? What is to happen if you break the line of an otherwise unbeaten army? Will you reach put your head into the noose?"

"No," say Main Headquarters, "we are not so foolish. We are not seeking Verdun. Nor are we seeking to blast a hole. Still less do we intend to march through such a hole. Our aim is quite different. We seek to wear down an army, not to make a gap to break the

heart of a nation, not to break a hole in a line. We have selected Verdun because we think the French will consider themselves bound to defend it at all costs, because we can so dispose our cannon around this apex of their front as to pound and batter the vital positions with superior range and superior metal, and force our enemy to expose division after division upon this anvil to our blows."

Falkenhayn's Tactical Conception

The strategic and psychological conceptions which had led Falkenhayn to select Verdun as the point of the German attack became mingled in the tactical sphere with his impressions derived from the success of the Gorlice-Tarnow attack on Russia in the previous year. There a punch followed by a scoop executed on a moderate front, but backed by a blasting concentration of artillery and gas, had led to a general withdrawal of the Russian line, and the process had been repeated again and

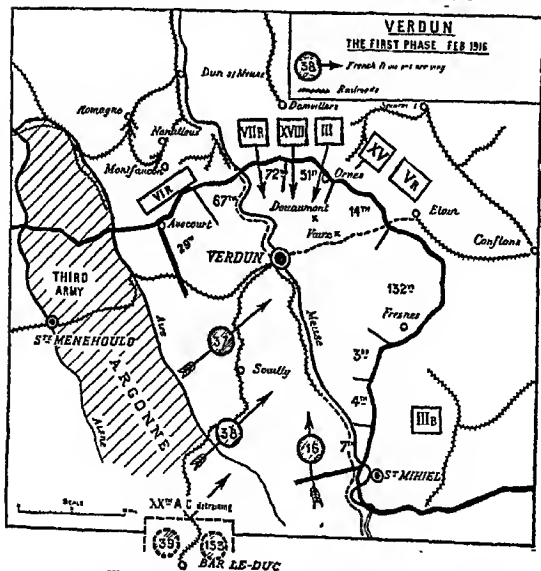
¹ *The London Magazine* published in November 1916.

again. His plan at Verdun was therefore by this intense punch on a narrow front with high-class troops and unprecedented cannon fire to hammer the French on the anvil of fixed positions, and if successful to rip their front, as a purely subsidiary development, to the right and left. In pursuance of this idea, he allocated to the Crown Prince nearly 2,000 extra guns, including all the latest types, and masses of shells, but added only four army corps to the forces of the Fifth German Army holding the line. He prescribed the exact frontage and scope of the attack and confined it strictly within the limits possible to these modest forces.

The French trench line ran in a half-moon salient five or six thousand yards

around the permanent forts of Verdun.¹ This position was cut in two unequal portions by the Meuse River, at this season nearly a kilometre wide. There were therefore the defences of the left bank (the west or the French left), the defences of the right bank (the east or French centre), and farther east (and to the French right) the plain of the Woëvre and the fortified eastern heights of the Meuse. It was upon the French centre, between the Meuse and the Woëvre plain, that the intense punch was to be directed. The German High Command believed that if this centre were pierced to a certain depth, the retreat of the two flanks would ensue automatically, or could easily be

¹ See Map on this page



VERDUN THE FIRST PHASE FEBRUARY 1916
Sketch map showing the movements of the French and German forces during the opening period of the Battle of Verdun

procured by further pressure. Their tactical studies of the ground before the war had led them to regard the positions of the left bank, unless and until compromised by the retreat of the French centre, as exceptionally strong and forbidding. All these conclusions and decisions were duly imparted to the Crown Prince and the Fifth Army Staff of which General von Knobelsdorf was the chief.

The Attitude and Responsibility of the Crown Prince

The Crown Prince has been harshly judged in the passion and propaganda of the war. He has been represented at once as a fop and as a tyrant, as a callow youth and as a Moloch, as an irresponsible passenger and as a commander guilty of gross and disastrous military errors. None of these contradictory alternatives fit the truth.

The German Imperial Princes in command of armies or groups of armies were held in strong control. The Headquarters Staff, main and local, decided and regulated everything, and the function of the ill-starred Heir Apparent was largely to bear the odium for their miscalculations and to receive, during the early years of the war, their ceremonious civilities. Even these civilities became attenuated as the long-drawn conflict deepened.

Nevertheless, the Crown Prince had influence. He had with the All Highest the access of a son to a father. He had the right to express a view, to pose a question, to require an answer from any General, however august. He also had a share in the Emperor's unique point of view. He was a proprietor. Life, limb and fortune were risked by all the combatants in the Great War, but the inheritance to the Imperial throne, turning so nakedly on the general result, exercised from the first days of the war a sobering and concentrating effect upon a hitherto careless mind. It may also be said that no group of German armies was more consistently successful than his, and that there is evidence that his personal influence—whatever it may have been—was often thrown into the right side of the scales.

The Crown Prince did not feel comfortable about the attack at Verdun in 1916. He thought that it would be wiser to finish first with Russia in the east. He had of course a long suppressed eagerness "to lead his tried and trusty troops once more to battle against the enemy, etc." But he was disquieted by Falkenhayn's repeated statements that the French Army was to be "bled white" at Verdun, and he felt no conviction that this would only happen to the French. It might even happen to the House of Hohenzollern. Moreover, on the tactical form of the attack his misgivings were supported or perhaps inspired by General von Knobelsdorf and his Staff. Their view was that the attack, if made at all, should be made on a broader front, comprising simultaneously both sides of the Meuse, and that large reserves should be at hand from the outset to exploit the advantages in the initial surprise.

The Crown Prince sent Knobelsdorf to lay these claims before Falkenhayn. Falkenhayn insisted on his plan. He had framed it in relation to the whole situation as he saw it and he adhered to the smallest detail. There was to be an anvil. There was to be a punch on a narrow front. There was to be an unparalleled artillery, and only just enough infantry to exploit success. They were to proceed step by step, their way forward being blasted at each stage by cannon. Thus, whether Verdun was taken or not, the French army would be ruined and the French nation sickened of war.

It was a simple solution for world-wide problems, but it was Falkenhayn's solution, and he was in supreme control. By his determination and superior authority Knobelsdorf was soon over-persuaded, and the Crown Prince was therefore overruled by the military hierarchy in mechanical unanimity. Such are the facts. While the newspapers of the time and in these days many of the histories have dwelt on the vanity and ruthless pride which prompted the heir to the Imperial throne to drive the manhood of Germany ceaselessly into the fires of Verdun, the truth is different. The Crown Prince, shocked

and stricken by the butchery and opposed to the operation, continuously endeavoured to use such influence as he commanded to bring it to a close, and we have Ludendorff's testimony to his expressions of relief and pleasure when the decision was finally taken

* * * *

Colonel Driant, Deputy for Nancy—
Gallieni and Joffre

The first warning of the unprepared condition of the Verdun defences reached the French Government through an irregular channel. Colonel Driant, Deputy for Nancy, commanded a group of Chasseur battalions in the advanced lines of Verdun. At the end of November this officer and Member of Parliament came on leave to Paris and requested to be heard by the Army Commission of the Chamber, and on December 1 he exposed to his fellow-deputies the lack of organization and general inadequacy of the defences of the fortress. The Commission confirmed the account given by Colonel Driant, and their report was presented by the Commission to the Minister of War.

The vigilant Gallieni was already possessed of similar statements from other quarters, and on December 16 he wrote to General Joffre. From different sources, he said, came accounts of the organization of the front which showed defects in the state of the defences at certain points, particularly and notably in the region of the Meurthe, and of Toul and Verdun. The network of trenches was not complete as it was on the greater part of the front. Such a situation, if it were true, ran the risk of presenting grave embarrassment. A rupture by the enemy in such circumstances would involve not only General Joffre's own responsibility but that of the whole Government. Recent experience of the war proved superabundantly that the first lines could be forced, but that the resistance of second lines could arrest even a successful attack. He asked for an assurance that on all the points of the front the organization at least of two lines should be designed and developed with all the necessary fortifi-

cations—barbed wire, inundations, abatis, etc.

The Commander-in-Chief hastened to reply on December 18 in a letter which holds its place in the records of ruffled officialdom. He asserted in categorical detail that nothing justified the misgivings of the Government. He concluded upon that peculiar professional note of which French military potentates have by no means the monopoly.

"But since these apprehensions are founded upon reports which allege defects in the state of the defences, I request you to communicate these reports to me and to specify their authors. I cannot be party to soldiers placed under my command bringing before the Government, by channels other than the hierarchic channel, complaints or protests concerning the execution of my orders. Neither does it become me to defend myself against vague imputations, the source of which I do not know. The mere fact that the Government encourages communications of this kind, whether from mobilized Members of Parliament or directly or indirectly from officers serving on the front, is calculated to disturb profoundly the spirit of discipline in the Army. The soldiers who write know that the Government weighs their advice against that of their Chiefs. The authority of these Chiefs is prejudiced. The morale of all suffers from this discredit.

"I could not lend myself to the continuation of this state of things. I require the whole-hearted confidence of the Government. If the Government trusts me, it can neither encourage nor tolerate practices which diminish that moral authority of my office, without which I cannot continue to bear the responsibility."¹

Evidently Colonel and Deputy Driant

¹ Mais puisque ces craintes sont fondées sur des comptes rendus vous signalant des défauts dans la mise en état de défense, je vous demande de me communiquer ces comptes rendus et de me désigner leurs auteurs.

Je ne puis admettre, en effet, que des militaires placés sous mes ordres fassent parvenir au gouvernement par d'autres voies que la voie hiérarchique des plaintes ou des réclamations au sujet de l'exécution de mes ordres.

Il ne me convient pas davantage de me

[Continued on page 818]

in his trenches before Verdun was in danger from more quarters than one.

It is asserted that General Gallieni had no mind to put up with this sort of thing, and that he framed a rejoinder both commanding and abrupt. But colleagues intervened with soothing processes. The Minister for War was marshalling with much assent the heads of a broad indictment of the Grand Quarter General. He was persuaded to reduce this particular incident to modest proportions. At any rate, in the end he signed a soft reply. Joffre and GQG had vindicated their authority. The Ministry for War and the presumptuous and meddling deputies had been put in their places. But there were still the facts to be reckoned with—and the Germans.

Castelnau's Mission

Evidence continued to accumulate, and gradually a certain misgiving began to mingle with the assurance of Chantilly. Their own officers sent to examine the Verdun defences threw, in discreet terms, doubts upon the confident assertions with which the Commander-in-Chief had replied to the Minister for War. The troops on the spot and their Commanders were convinced they were soon to be attacked. The defences were still unsatisfactory. The Parliamentary Commissions buzzed incessantly. Finally, on January 20, General de Castelnau, the Major-General of the armies, and General Joffre's virtual Second-in-Command and potential successor, immediately on his return

defendre contre des imputations vagues dont j'ignore la source

Le seul fait que le gouvernement accueille des communications de ce genre provenant, soit de parlementaires mobilisés, soit directement ou indirectement d'officiers servant sur le front, est de nature à jeter un trouble profond dans l'esprit de discipline de l'armée. Les militaires qui écrivent savent que le gouvernement fait état de leurs correspondances vis à vis de leurs chefs. L'autorité de ceux-ci est atteinte, le moral de tous souffre de ce discrédit.

Je ne saurais me prêter à la continuation de cet état de choses. J'ai besoin de la confiance entière du gouvernement. S'il me l'accorde, il ne peut ni encourager ni tolérer des pratiques qui diminuent l'autorité morale de mon commandement et faute de laquelle je ne pourrai plus continuer à en assumer la responsabilité.

from Salonica, visited Verdun in person. He found much to complain of and gave various directions to remedy the neglects. A regiment of engineers was hurried to the scene, the necessary materials for fortification were provided, communications were improved and work begun. But time was now very short. The German masses were gathering fast. The enormous magazines swelled each day. Their immense concentration of heavy artillery perfected itself.

Quite early in January the 2nd Bureau (Intelligence) began to indicate Verdun as the point at which a German attack would be delivered. A constant increase of batteries and troops in the regions north of Montfaucon and on both sides of the Meuse, the presence of "storm" divisions near Hattonchatel, and the arrival of Austrian heavy howitzers were definitely reported. General Dupont, head of the 2nd Bureau, declared with conviction that Verdun was to be the object of a heavy and immediate attack.

The French Operations Staff, to judge by Pierrefeu's excellent account,¹ seemed to have abandoned their scepticism slowly. Certainly there seemed many parts of the French line more attractive to a hostile attack. But by the middle of February, those who doubted that a great German offensive was soon to break upon Verdun were few. The majority of the staff were at last convinced that the hour was near and all—so we are told—were eager for the day and confident of its results. No one, however, had the least idea what the mechanical force of the onslaught would be.

* * * *

The Battle Begins

At four o'clock in the morning of February 21 the explosion of a fourteen-inch shell in the Archbishop's Palace at Verdun gave signal of battle, and after a brief but most powerful bombardment

¹ "CQG," by Jean de Pierrefeu. This officer was employed throughout the war to draft the official communiqués of the French Headquarters. He had the best opportunities of knowing exactly what took place. He is a writer of extraordinary force and distinction.



Photo Imperial War Museum

THE GERMAN CROWN PRINCE WITH HIS MEN

Responsibility for the slaughter at Verdun has frequently in ill-informed quarters been fixed upon the Crown Prince of Germany. It is true that he commanded the Army Group before Verdun. Nominally, therefore, he was the butcher sending thousands of his soldiers to certain death. The Verdun plan, however, was Falkenhayn's; its execution was carried out by the staff. For the operation the Crown Prince had distaste; when it was finally abandoned his relief was profound.

three German Army Corps advanced upon the apex of the French front, their right hand on the Meuse. The troops in the forward positions attacked were, except towards the eastern flank, driven backwards towards the fortress line. The battle was continued on the 22nd and the 23rd. The brave Colonel Driant was killed in the woodlands covering the retreat of his Chasseurs. The line was reformed on the ridges near Douaumont, but the German six-inch artillery, dragged forward by tractors, hurled upon the new position so terrific a fire-storm that the French division chiefly concerned collapsed entirely. During the afternoon of the 24th, both the General commanding the Verdun area and the Commander of the Group of Armies in which it lay (Langle de Car) telegraphed to Chantilly, advising an immediate withdrawal to the left bank of the Meuse, and the consequent

abandonment of the town and fortress of Verdun.

The Composure of General Joffre

General Joffre was by no means disconcerted by these unexpected and untoward events. He persevered throughout that admirable serenity for which he was noted, which no doubt would have equally distinguished him on the flaming crests of Douaumont. He assented on the 22nd to the movement of the 1st and XXth Corps, and to a request to Sir Douglas Haig to relieve in the line with British troops the Tenth French Army to reinforce Verdun. For the rest he remained in Olympian tranquillity, inspiring by his unaffected calm, regular meals and peaceful slumbers confidence in all about him.

A less detached view was necessarily taken by Castelnau. The Second French Army had been relieved in

the line some time before by the increasing British forces. The army was in the best order, rested and trained. Its staff had not been affected by the new French rule obliging every Staff Officer to do a spell of duty with the fighting troops. Its Commander, Petain, had gained already in the war one of the highest reputations. On the evening of February 24, General de Castelnau presented himself to General Joffre and proposed to move the whole of the Second French Army to Verdun. The Commander-in-Chief assented to this. At eleven o'clock on the same night Castelnau, having received further reports of the most serious character, requested by telephone permission to proceed personally to Verdun with plenary powers.

Pierrefeu has described the incident which followed. The Commander-in-Chief was already asleep. Following his

almost invariable custom he had retired to rest at ten o'clock. The orderly officer on duty declared it impossible to disturb him. At first Castelnau submitted. But a few minutes later a further message from Verdun foreshadowing the immediate evacuation of the whole of the right bank of the Meuse arrived, and on this Castelnau would brook no further obstruction. He went in person to the villa Poiret in which the great soldier was reposing. Upon the express order of the Major-General an aide-de-camp took the responsibility of knocking at the formidable double-locked door. The supreme Chief, after perusing the telegrams, gave at once the authorization for General de Castelnau to proceed with full powers, declared there must be no retreat, and then returned to his rest.

Activities of Castelnau and Petain

Castelnau started forthwith a little



Photo. New Yorker Illustrations

FRENCH SHELL DUMP AT VERDUN

As soon as it became apparent to the French that the battle of Verdun was likely to be decided by sheer weight of metal, everything possible was done to augment the reserve of ammunition. Thousands of shells were stacked at points shielded from the German artillery, to be brought forward to the guns as required. Here is shown a small corner of one of the great dumps near Verdun.

after mid-
night At
Avize, Head-
quarters of
Langle de
Cary and the
centre group
of armies, he
quelled the
pessimism
that existed,
and from
there tele-
phoned to
Verdun an-
nouncing his
impending
arrival and
calling upon
General Herr
"on the order
of the Com-
mander-in-
Chief not to
yield ground
but to defend
it step by
step," and
warning him
that if this
order was not
executed,

"the consequences would be most grave
for him (Herr)." By daylight on the 25th
Castelnau reached Verdun and found
himself confronted with the tragic
scenes of confusion and disorder which
haunt the immediate rear of a defeated
battle-front. All accounts agree that
the influence and authority of Castelnau
on the 25th reanimated the defence and
for the moment restored the situation.
Wherever he went, decision and order
followed him. He reiterated the com-
mand at all costs to hold the heights of
the Meuse and to stop the enemy on the
right bank. The XXth and 1st Army
Corps now arriving on the scene were
thrown into the battle with this intention.
While taking these emergency measures,
Castelnau had already telegraphed to
Petain ordering him to take command,
not only of the Second French Army,
which was now moving, but also of all
the troops in the fortified region of
Verdun.



Photo Keystone

"THEY SHALL NOT PASS!"

Two French soldiers lie here in a shell crater at Verdun. They have defended their positions to the last, and if the Germans have advanced beyond this point it is because the defenders are no more. It was in this spirit, true to Falkenhayn's belief, that the French stood before Verdun. They died in thousands but the Germans did not pass.

The Struggle Prolonged

On the morning of the 26th Petain received from Castelnau the direction of the battle, which he continued to conduct, while at the same time mastering the local situation. The neglect of the field and permanent defences of a fortress which it was decided to defend to the death, now bequeathed a cruel legacy to the French troops. In advance of the permanent forts there were neither continuous lines of trenches nor the efficient organization of strong points. Telephone systems and communication trenches were scarce or non-existent. The forts themselves were all empty or dismantled. Even their machine guns and cupolas had been extracted and their flanking batteries disarmed. All these deficiencies had now to be repaired in full conflict and under tremendous fire.

Besides the direction of the battle and the organization of his forces and rapidly growing artillery, Petain took a

number of general decisions. Four successive lines of defence were immediately set in hand. In full accord with the views of the much-chastised General Coutanceau, Petain directed the immediate reoccupation and re-arming of all the forts. To each he assigned a garrison with fourteen days' food and water, and solemn orders never to capitulate. The immense value of the large subterranean galleries of these forts, in which a whole battalion could live in absolute security till the moment of counter-attack, was now to be proved. Lastly, the new commander instituted the marvellous system of motor-trucks between Verdun and Bai le Duc. No less than three thousand of these passed up and down this road every twenty-four hours, and conveyed each week during seven months of conflict an average of 90,000 men and 50,000 tons of material. Along this "Sacred Way," as it was rightly called, no less than sixty-six divisions of the French Army were to pass on their journey to the anvil and the furnace fires.

By the end of February the first German onslaught had been stemmed. Large armies were on both sides grappling with each other round the fortress, ever-increasing streams of reinforcements and munitions flowed from all France and Germany towards the conflict, and ever-increasing trains of wounded ebbed swiftly from it. It had become a trial of strength and military honour between Germany and France. Blood was up and heads were down. Vain had it been for Falkenhayn to write at Christmas: "Germany will be perfectly free to accelerate or draw out her offensive, to intensify or break it off from time to time as suits her purpose." His own professional and official existence was now engaged. The wine had been drawn and the cup must be drained. The French and German armies continued accordingly to tear each other to pieces with the utmost fury, and the power of the German artillery inflicted grievous losses day by day on the now more numerous French.

Falkenhayn Entangled

When the Germans had attacked on February 21, they had, in accordance with Falkenhayn's plan, used only the three Army Corps of their centre, and three others had stood idle on the two flanks. It can scarcely be doubted that had the whole assaulting forces been thrown in at once, the position of the French, already so critical, could not at the outset have been maintained. However, on March 6 the three flanking Army Corps joined in the battle, and a new series of sanguinary engagements was fought during the whole of March and April for the possession mainly of the hill called "Le Mort Homme" on the left bank of the Meuse, and for the Cote du Poivre on the right. But the Germans achieved no success comparable to that of their opening. The conditions of the conflict had become more equal. Closely locked and battling in the huge crater-fields and under the same steel storm, German and French infantry fell together by scores of thousands. By the end of April nearly a quarter of a million French and Germans had been killed or wounded in the fatal area, though influencing in no decisive way the balance of the World War.

To the war of slaughter and battles was added that of propaganda and communiqués. In this the French had largely the advantage. They did not cease to proclaim day after day the enormous German losses which attended every assault. As the Germans were obviously storming entrenchments and forts, the world at large was prepared to believe that they must be making sacrifices far greater than those of the French. "Up till March," says Ludendorff, "the impression was that Verdun was a German victory," but thereafter opinion changed. Certainly during April and May Allies and neutrals were alike persuaded that Germany had experienced a profound disappointment in her attack on Verdun and had squandered thereon the flower of her armies.

Cost of a Rigid Defence

I myself shared the common impression that the German losses must be



GERMAN PRISONERS AT VERDUN

Ueto Copyright

The scene after a French assault upon the German position south east of Fort Douaumont. The French soldiers in the foreground stand in the trench from which the attack was launched. The Germans have been disarmed and sent back from the captured trench beyond the skyline.



WE OCCUPIED THE CRATER FRENCH TROOPS ADVANCING

This vivid drawing in which French infantry are seen advancing to occupy the enormous crater, shows the state of dazed helplessness into which the victims of such a weapon are thrown. Of the French troops, however, retain the unshaken determination necessary to occupy the crater.



THE MINE EXPLOSION ON THE VERDUN FRONT

From the drawing by I. Stewart

The scene created by the explosion of a mine driven under the German lines conveys admirably the desperate defence of their position. Many Germans have been killed, more have been wounded, and few are left who still

heavier than those of the French. All accounts however showed that the strain upon the French Army was enormous. They were compelled to defend all sorts of positions, good, bad and indifferent, and to fight every inch of the ground with constant counter-attacks under a merciless artillery, and it was clear that they were conducting the defence in the most profuse manner. "The French," I wrote at the time, "suffered more than the defence need suffer by their valiant and obstinate retention of particular positions. Meeting an artillery attack is like catching a cricket ball. Shock is dissipated by drawing back the hands. A little 'give,' a little suppleness, and the violence of impact is vastly reduced. Yet, notwithstanding the obstinate ardour and glorious passion for mastery of the French, the German losses at Verdun greatly exceeded theirs."¹

It is with surprise which will perhaps be shared by others that I have learned the true facts. During the defensive phase from February to June the French Army suffered at Verdun the loss of no fewer than 179,000 men (apart from officers) killed, missing or prisoners, and 263,000 wounded—a frightful total of 442,000, or with officers probably 460,000. The Germans on the other hand, although the attackers, used their man power so much less and their artillery so much more that their loss, including officers, did not exceed 72,000 killed, missing and prisoners, and 206,000 wounded—a total of 278,000. From the totals of both sides there should be deducted the usual one-eighth for casualties on other parts of the front where French and Germans faced each other. But this in no way alters the broad fact that the French sacrificed in defending Verdun more than three men to every two attacking Germans. To this extent therefore the tactical and psychological conceptions underlying Falkenhayn's scheme were vindicated.

Gallieni's Last Act

Ever since the opening phase of the struggle of Verdun the personal position of General Joffre had deteriorated. The

neglect to prepare the field defences of Verdun, the disarming of its forts, the proved want of information of the Commander-in-Chief and his Headquarters Staff upon this grave matter, the fact that it had been left to the Parliamentary Commission to raise the alarm, the obstinacy with which this alarm had been received and resented—were facts known throughout Government and Opposition circles in Paris. The respective parts played by Joffre and Castelnau in the first intense crisis of the Verdun situation were also widely comprehended. In the whole of this episode little credit could be discovered either for the Commander-in-Chief or for the gigantic organization of the Grand Quarter General sourly described as "Chantilly."

Consideration of all these facts led General Gallieni to a series of conclusions and resolves. First, he wished to bring Joffre to Paris, from which centre he would exercise that general command over all the French armies, whether in France or the Orient, which had been entrusted to him. Secondly, he wished to place General de Castelnau at the head of the armies in France. Thirdly, he proposed to diminish in certain respects the undue powers which Chantilly had engrossed to itself, and to restore to the Ministry of War the administrative functions of which it had to a large extent been deprived. Gallieni laid proposals in this sense, though without actually naming Castelnau, before the Council of Ministers on March 7, 1916. France now had the opportunity of securing for her armies and for her Alhes military leadership in the field of the first order without at the same time losing any advantage which could be derived from the world prestige of Joffre.

The Cabinet was greatly alarmed. They feared a political and ministerial crisis, as well as a crisis in the Supreme Command—all during the height of the great battles raging around Verdun. Briand intervened with dexterous argument, but General Gallieni was resolved. Stricken by an illness which compelled an early and grave operation, he had laid what he considered his testament and the last remaining service he could

¹ *London Magazine*. Written in August, published November, 1916.

render France before his colleagues. When his advice was not accepted he immediately resigned. For several days his resignation was kept a secret. Then it was explained on grounds of health and the charge of the War Ministry was taken temporarily by the Minister of Marine. Finally, when his resolves were seen to be unshakable a colourless but inoffensive successor was discovered in the person of General Roques, an intimate friend of Joffre and actually suggested by him. Thus did General Joffre receive a renewed lease of power sufficient to enable him to add to the dearly bought laurels of Verdun the still more costly trophies of the Somme.

Gallieni was now to quit the scene for ever. Within a fortnight of his resignation he withdrew to a private hospital for an operation—at his age of the greatest danger—but which if successful meant a swift restoration of activity and health. From the effects of this operation he expired on May 27. To his memory and record not only his countrymen, but also their Allies, who profited by his genius, sagacity and virtue, and might have profited far more, should not fail to do justice.

* * * *

"Unity of Front"

After the disasters of 1915 in earnest effort had been made by the British, French and Russian Governments to concert their action for 1916. No sooner had Briand attained the Premiership than he used a phrase which pitifully expressed the first great and obvious need of the Allies—"Unity of front." Unity of front did not mean unity of command. That idea, although it had dawned on many minds, was not yet within the bounds of possibility. Unity of front or "only one front," meant that the whole great circle of fire and steel within which the Allies were gripping the Central Powers should be treated and organized as if it were the line of a single army or a single nation, that everything planned on one part of the front should be related to everything planned on every other part of the front, that instead of a succession

of disconnected offensives, a combined and simultaneous effort should be made by the three great Allies to overpower and beat down the barriers of hostile resistance. In these broad and sound conceptions Mr Asquith, Mr Lloyd George, Lord Kitchener, Monsieur Briand, General Joffre, General Cadorna, the Czar and General Alexeieff, all four Governments and all four General Staffs, were in full accord.

In pursuance and execution of this conception it had been decided to make a vast combined onslaught upon Germany and Austria, both in the east and in the west, during the summer months. The Russians could not be ready till June, nor the British till July. It was therefore agreed that a waiting policy should as far as possible be followed during the first six months of the year while the Russians were re-equipping and increasing their armies, while the new British armies were perfecting their training, and while enormous masses of shells and guns were being accumulated. To these immense labours all four great nations henceforth committed themselves.

Genesis of the Somme

It was further agreed that the Russians should endeavour to hold the Germans as far as possible on the northern part of the Eastern Front and that the main Russian attack should be launched in Galicia in the southern theatre. At the same time, or in close relation to this, it was decided that a tremendous offensive, exceeding in scale anything ever previously conceived, should be delivered by the British and French, hand in hand, astride of the Somme (*a cheval sur la Somme*).

It was intended to attempt to break through on a front of seventy kilometres the English to the north of the Somme on the twenty-five kilometres from Hebuterne to Maricourt, and the French astride the Somme, but mainly to the south of it, on a forty-five kilometre front from Maricourt right down to Lassigny. Two entire British armies, the Third and Fourth under Allenby and Rawlinson, and comprising from twenty-five to

thirty divisions, constituted the British attack, and three French armies, the Second, the Sixth and the Third comprising thirty-nine divisions, were to be placed under the command of Foch for the French sector. The whole of these five armies, aggregating over one and a half million men and supported by four or five thousand guns, were thus to be hurled upon the Germans at a moment when it was hoped they and their Austrian allies would already be heavily and critically engaged on the Eastern Frontiers. The original scheme for this stupendous battle was outlined in December, 1915, at the first Conference of the Allied General Staffs at Chantilly, and its final shape was determined at a second Conference on February 11.

Reaction of Verdun upon the Somme Plan

The ink was hardly dry on these conventions when the cannon of Verdun began to thunder, and the Germans were seen advancing successfully upon the neglected defences of that fortress. It is certainly arguable that the French would have been wise to have played with the Germans around Verdun, economising their forces as much as possible, selling ground at a high price in German blood wherever necessary, and endeavouring to lead their enemies into a pocket or other unfavourable position. In this way they might have inflicted upon the Germans very heavy losses without risking much themselves and as we now know they would certainly have baffled Falkenhayn's plan of wearing out the French Army and beating it to pieces upon the anvil. By the end of June the Germans might thus have exhausted the greater part of their offensive effort, advancing perhaps a dozen miles over ground of no decisive strategic significance, while all the time the French would have been accumulating gigantic forces for an overwhelming blow upon the Somme.

However, other counsels—or shall we call them passions?—prevailed, and the whole French nation and army hurled itself into the struggle around Verdun. This decision not only wore out the

French reserves and consumed the offensive strength of their army, but it greatly diminished the potential weight of the British attack which was in preparation. Already before the German attack opened, Sir Douglas Haig had taken over an additional sector of the French front, liberating, as we have seen, the Second French Army which was thus enabled to restore the situation at Verdun. As soon as the Battle of Verdun had begun, Joffre requested Haig to take over a fresh sector, and this was accordingly effected in the early days of March, thus liberating the whole of the Tenth French Army. Thus the number of British divisions resting and training for the great battle was at the outset sensibly diminished.

As the Verdun conflict prolonged itself and deepened all through March, April and May, the miracle upon the fighting strength and disposable surplus of the French Army became increasingly grave. And as July approached the thirty-nine French divisions of the original scheme had shrunk to an available eighteen. This greatly diminished the front of the battle and the weight behind the blow. The numbers available were reduced by at least one-third, and the front to be attacked must be contracted from seventy to about forty-five kilometres. Whereas in the original conception the main onslaught would have been made by the French with the British co-operating in great strength as a smaller army, these roles had now been reversed by the force of events. The main effort must be made by the British, and it was the French who would co-operate to the best of their ability in a secondary role.

* * * *

The Revival of Russia

While the eyes of the world were riveted on the soul-stirring frenzy of Verdun, and while the ponderous preparations for the Allied counter-stroke on the Somme were being completed, great events were at explosion-point in the East. To those who knew that Russia was recovering her strength with every day, with every hour that passed, who knew of the marshalling of her

inexhaustible manhood, and the ever-multiplying and broadening streams of munitions of war which were flowing towards her, the German attack on Verdun had come with the sense of indescribable relief. Russia had been brought very low in the preceding autumn, before the rearguards of the winter closed down on her torn and depleted line. But mortal injury had been warded off. Her armies had been extricated, her front was maintained, and now behind it "the whole of Russia" was labouring to re-equip and reconstitute her power.

Few episodes of the Great War are more impressive than the resuscitation, re-equipment and renewed giant effort of Russia in 1916. It was the last glorious exertion of the Czar and the Russian people for victory before both were to sink into the abyss of ruin and horror. By the summer of 1916 Russia, who eighteen months before had been almost disarmed, who during 1915 had sustained an unbroken series of frightful defeats, had actually managed, by her own efforts and the resources of her Allies, to place in the field—organized, armed and equipped—sixty Army Corps in place of the thirty-five with which she had begun the war. The Trans-Siberian Railway had been doubled over a distance of 6,000 kilometres, as far east as Lake Baikal. A new railway 1,400 kilometres long, built through the depth of winter at the cost of unnumbered lives, linked Petrograd with the perennially ice-free waters of the Murman coast. And by both these channels munitions from the rising factories of Britain, France and Japan, or procured by British credit from the United States, were pouring into Russia in broadening streams. The domestic production of every form of war material had simultaneously been multiplied many fold.

The Fatal Defect

It was however true that the new Russian armies, though more numerous and better supplied with munitions than ever before, suffered from one fatal deficiency which no Allied assistance could repair. The lack of educated men, men who at least could read and

write, and of trained officers and sergeants woefully diminished the effectiveness of her enormous masses. Numbers, brawn, cannon and shells, the skill of great commanders, the bravery of patriotic troops, were to lose two-thirds of their power for want, not of the higher military science, but of Board School education, for want of a hundred thousand human beings capable of thinking for themselves and acting with reasonable efficiency in all the minor and subordinate functions on which every vast organization—most of all the organization of modern war—depends. The mighty limbs of the giant were armed, the conceptions of his brain were clear, his heart was still true, but the nerves which could transform resolve and design into action were but partially developed or non-existent. This defect, irremediable at the time, fatal in its results, in no way detracts from the merit or the marvel of the Russian achievement, which will for ever stand as the supreme monument and memorial of the Empire founded by Peter the Great.

At the beginning of the summer the Russian front, stretching 1,200 kilometres from the Baltic to the Roumanian frontier, was held by three main groups of armies, the whole aggregating upwards of 134 divisions: the northern group under the veteran Kourapatine, the centre group (between the Pinsk and the Pripiet) under Evert, the southern group (to the south of the Pripiet) under Brusilov. Against this array the Central Empires marshalled the German armies of Hindenberg and Ludendorff in the north, of Prince Leopold of Bavaria and General von Linsingen opposite the centre and southern centre, and the three Austrian armies of the Archduke Frederick in the south. The drain of Verdun and the temptations of the Trentino had drawn or diverted from the Eastern Front both reserves and reinforcements, and practically all the heavy artillery. And in the whole of the sector south of the Pripiet, comprising all Galicia and the Bukovina, not a German division remained to sustain the armies of the Austrian Archduke against the forces of Brusilov.



GENERAL BRUSILOV

General Brusilov, one of the ablest of the Czarist army chiefs, has already figured frequently in this account. In August 1915 he commanded the Eighth Russian Army, but two years later in 1916 was at the head of the southern group of armies. The offensive launched by Brusilov in June 1916 dealt a staggering blow to the Austrians and caused the Germans many misgivings. When later in 1917 the Russian troubles began, Brusilov was one of those who advised the Czar to abdicate.

Brusilov's Offensive

The original scheme had contemplated July 1 as the date of the general Allied attack, both in the west and in the east. But the cries of Italy from the Trentino and the obvious strain under which the French were living at Verdun led to requests being made to the Czar to intervene if possible at an earlier date. Accordingly on June 4 Brusilov, after a thirty-hours bombardment set his armies of over a million men in motion and advanced in a general attack on the 350-kilometre front between the Pripiet

and the Roumanian frontier.

The results were equally astonishing to victors and vanquished, to friend and foe.

It may well be that the very antedating of the attack imparted to it an element of surprise that a month later would have been lacking. Certainly the Austrians were entirely unprepared for the weight, vigour and enormous extent of the assault. The long loose lines in the east in no way reproduced the conditions of the Western Front. The great concentrations of artillery, the intricate system of fortification, the continuous zones of machine gun fire, the network of roads and railways feeding the front and enabling reserves to be thrown in thousands and tens of thousands in a few hours upon any threatened point were entirely lacking in the east. Moreover the Austrian armies contained large numbers of Czech troops fighting

under duress for a cause they did not cherish and an Empire whose downfall they desired.

The Results of Surprise

No one was more surprised than Falkenhayn.

"After the failure,"¹ he wrote, "of the March offensive in Lithuania and Courland, the Russian front had remained absolutely inactive. There was no reason whatever to doubt that

¹ *General Headquarters 1914-1916 and its Critical Decisions*. General von Falkenhayn, pp. 244-247.

the front was equal to any attack on it by the forces opposing it at the moment

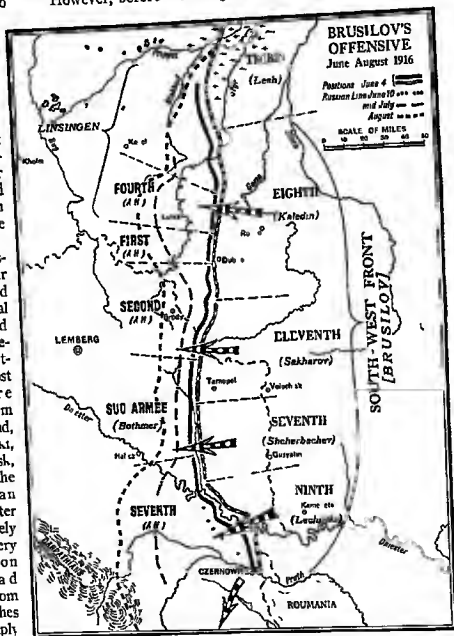
General Conrad von Hotzendorf declared that a Russian attack in Galicia could not be undertaken with any prospect of success in less than from four to six weeks from the time when we should have learnt that it was coming. This period at least would be required for the concentration of the Russian forces, which must be a necessary preliminary thereto.

However, before

ing groups by concentrating their reserves. It was a matter not simply of an attack in the true sense of the word, but rather of a big scale of reconnaissance.

"A 'reconnaissance' like Brusilov's was only possible, of course, if the General had decisive reason for holding a low opinion of his enemy's power of resistance. And on this point he made no miscalculation. His attack met with splendid success, both in Volhynia

any indication of a movement of this sort had been noticed, to say nothing of announced, a most urgent call for assistance from our ally reached German G.H.Q. on the 5th of June. "The Russians, under the command of General Brusilov, had on the previous day attacked almost the entire front, from the Stry-Bend, near Kolki, below Lutsk, right to the Roumanian borders. After a relatively short artillery preparation they had got up from their trenches and simply marched forward. Only in a few places had they even taken the trouble to form attack-



BRUSILOV'S OFFENSIVE JUNE-AUGUST 1916

Sketch map showing the extent of Brusilov's advance during the months of June, July and August, 1916. This offensive broke the resistance of the Austro-Hungarian Armies over a front of 195 miles. It did more. It convinced Germany that after all Hindenburg's warning 'Russia is only scotched not slain' had been justified, and this new orientation of the German viewpoint was one of the factors which hastened the eclipse of Falkenhayn and the ascendancy to supreme power of H.

and in the Bukovina East of Lutsk the Austro-Hungarian front was clean broken through, and in less than two days a yawning gap fully thirty miles wide had been made in it. The part of the 4th Austro-Hungarian Army, which was in line here, melted away into miserable remnants.

"Things went no better with the 7th Austro-Hungarian Army in the Bukovina. It flowed back along its entire front, and it was impossible to judge at the moment whether and when it could be brought to a halt again.

"We were therefore faced with a situation which had fundamentally changed. A wholesale failure of this kind had certainly not entered into the calculations of the Chief of the General Staff (himself). He had considered it impossible."

Consequences

All along the front the Russian armies marched over the Austrian lines or through wide breaches in them. In the north the army of Kaledine advanced in three days on a 70-kilometre front no less than 50 kilometres, taking Lutsk. In the south the army of Letchitsky, forcing successively the lines of the Dniester and the Pruth, invested Czernovitch after an advance of 60 kilometres. The German front under Linsingen wherever attacked maintained itself unbroken or withdrew in good order in consequence of adjacent Austrian retirements. But within a week of the beginning of the offensive the Austrians had lost 100,000 prisoners, and before the end of the month their losses in killed, wounded, dispersed and prisoners amounted to nearly three-quarters of a million men. Czernovitch and practically the whole of the Bukovina had been reconquered, and the Russian troops again stood on the slopes of the Carpathians. The scale of the victory

and the losses of the defeated in men, material and territory were the greatest which the war in the east had yet produced.

The Price of Verdun

The Austrian offensive on the Trentino was instantly paralysed, and eight divisions were recalled and hurried to the shattered Eastern Front. Although the Battle of Verdun was at its height and Falkenhayn deeply committed to procuring at least a moral decision there, and while he could watch each week the storm clouds gathering denser and darker on the Somme, he found himself forced to withdraw eight German divisions from France to repair those dykes he had so improvidently neglected in the east, or at any rate to limit the deluge now pouring forward impetuously in so many directions. The Hindenburg-Ludendorff armies, which had successfully sustained the subsidiary attacks delivered by the Russians upon their front, were also called upon to contribute large reinforcements for the south, and an immense German effort was made to close the breaches and re-establish the Southern Front. By the end of June the failure of the Austro-German campaign of 1916, which had opened with such high prospects, was apparent. The Trentino offensive was hamstrung, Verdun was in Ludendorff's words "an open wasting sore",¹ and a disaster of the first magnitude had been suffered in that very portion of the Eastern Front which had offered the most fruitful prospects to Teutonic initiative. But this was not the end. The main struggle of the year was about to begin in the west, and Roumania, convulsed with excitement at the arrival of victorious Russian armies before her very gates, loomed up black with the menace of impending war.

¹ *War Memories*, Vol. I, p. 267.

